BBC

BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR PARANOIA
WHY ARMAGEDDON STALKED THE 1980s

HISTORY MAGAZINE

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE
October 2020 / **www.historyextra.com**

ANNE BOLEYN'S FINAL BATTLE

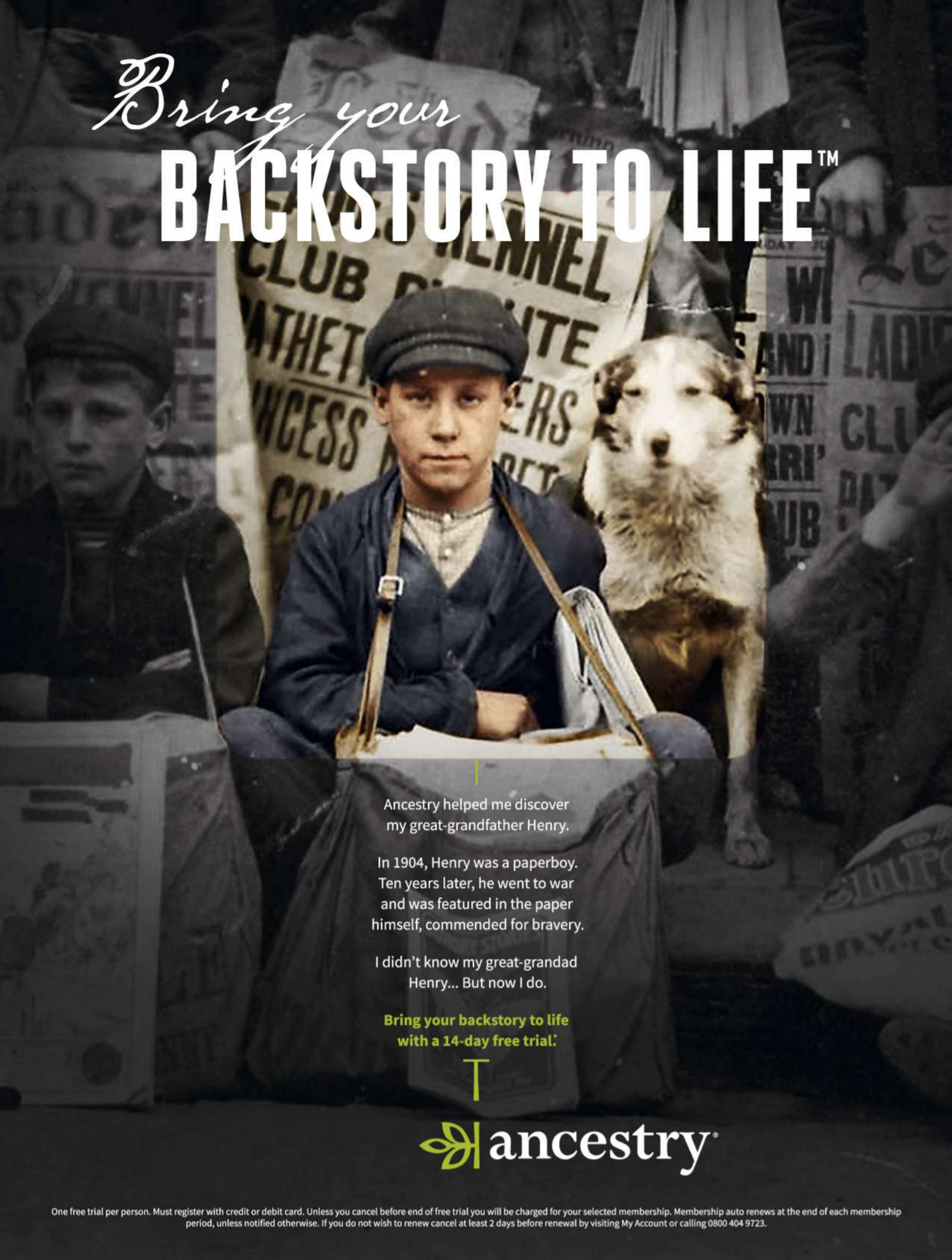
The dramatic last moments of a queen's life

Mayflower myth
Did the Pilgrim Fathers create a tolerant new world?

A SIKH TRAGEDY
The Indian kingdom that fell foul of the British empire

The African teacher who transformed **Anglo-Saxon England**

Fishing for gold
How eels powered the medieval economy


Bring your
BACKSTORY TO LIFE™
Ancestry helped me discover
my great-grandfather Henry.
In 1904, Henry was a paperboy.
Ten years later, he went to war
and was featured in the paper
himself, commended for bravery.
I didn't know my great-grandad
Henry... But now I do.
Bring your backstory to life
with a 14-day free trial.
ancestry

One free trial per person. Must register with credit or debit card. Unless you cancel before end of free trial you will be charged for your selected membership. Membership auto renews at the end of each membership period, unless notified otherwise. If you do not wish to renew cancel at least 2 days before renewal by visiting My Account or calling 0800 404 9723.

WELCOME

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2020

"We know how the story ends. Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, was executed in May 1536, having been tried and sentenced to death for committing high treason. But at the time, none of this was certain. **No queen of England had been executed before**, and even after the trial was over, doubts remained as to whether Henry would accede to the killing of his wife (who was almost certainly innocent). In our cover feature, on page 20, Tracy Borman returns to this dark chapter in English history, revealing how the main players navigated these uncertain times.

It was during the reign of Anne Boleyn's daughter, Elizabeth I, that English settlers first attempted to colonise North America, and a few decades later, in 1620, the ***Mayflower* crossed the Atlantic**, carrying the Pilgrim Fathers. Their voyage, and the colony they established, are foundational parts of the story of the United States, although the history is more complex than the legend. As we reach the 400th anniversary of the ship's departure, James Evans revisits this journey to 'the promised land'. You can read that on page 48.

Also in this magazine, you'll find our annual exploration of history education. We've devoted much of it to how **universities are responding to Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter** movement, which both have major implications for how we will study the past in 2020/21. Turn to the centre of the issue for that and, whether you're a student or not, we hope you'll find it thought-provoking.

Rob Attar
Editor

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Priya Atwal
I first became fascinated by the powerful queens of the Sikh empire when I was aged 19. Now, my new book explores the history of this once great Indian kingdom, finally placing these forgotten women back at the heart of its story.
Priya charts the meteoric rise and fall of the Sikh empire **on page 28**

John Wyatt Greenlee
Trying to figure out why 17th-century maps of London included Dutch eel ships has led me to study the role eels have played in English history, including learning about eels as a de facto medieval currency for rental payments.
John reveals the important role eels played in the medieval economy **on page 43**

Isabel Wilkerson
The American caste system grew out of the desire to categorise people to build a new world. By looking at this history, I hope people will be able to see the quiet, destructive nature of caste and hierarchy that's still in our lives today.
Isabel views the United States through the lens of caste **on page 60**

COVER IMAGES: ANNE BOLEYN, C1533–36 (OIL ON PANEL) BY ENGLISH SCHOOL, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON; BRIDGEMAN. NUCLEAR ICON: DREAMSTIME. THIS PAGE: STEVE SAYERS/NATHAN CLARKE/ALAMY

MORE FROM US

Subscription offer

Try 3 issues for £5*
when you subscribe.
Turn to page 26
for details

*Available to UK Direct Debit orders only.

For more information on the content in this magazine,
scan the QR code (right) with the camera on your smart phone or tablet

historyextra.com

The website of *BBC History Magazine* is filled with exciting content on British and world history, and includes an extensive archive of magazine content

The History Extra podcast

Download episodes for free from iTunes and other providers, or via **historyextra.com/podcast**

Our digital editions

BBC History Magazine is available for the Kindle, Kindle Fire, iPad/iPhone, Google Play and Zinio. Find us in your app store or visit **historyextra.com/subscribe**

Facebook and Twitter

twitter.com/historyextra
facebook.com/historyextra

Our special editions

Discover our range of collector's editions at **historyextra.com/special-editions**

Contact us

PHONE **Subscriptions & back issues**
03330 162115 **Editorial** 0117 300 8699
EMAIL **Subscriptions & back issues**
www.buysubscriptions.com/contactus
Editorial historymagazine@historyextra.com
POST **Subscriptions & back issues**
BBC History Magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF. Basic annual subscription rates: UK: £48, Eire/Europe: £67, ROW: £69

In the **US/Canada** you can contact us at:
PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037
BHIcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com,
britsubs.com/history, Toll-free 800-342-3592

CONTENTS

OCTOBER 2020

FEATURES

20 Anne Boleyn's last battle
Tracy Borman explores the dramatic final days of Anne Boleyn – the first queen of England to be executed

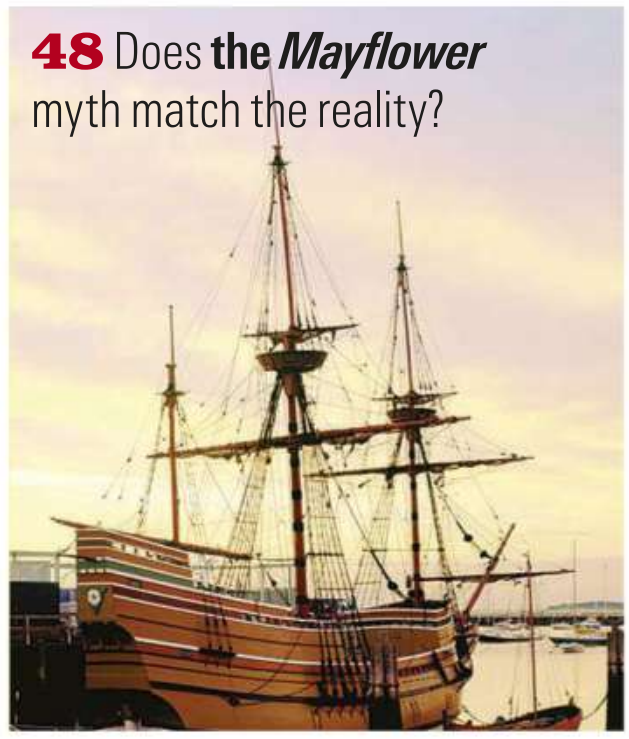
28 A Sikh tragedy
Priya Atwal chronicles the rapid rise and fall of the mighty 19th-century Sikh empire

35 An African pioneer
Michael Wood on the little-known Libyan teacher who revolutionised learning in Anglo-Saxon England

43 Medieval eels
John Wyatt Greenlee considers why eels gained such popularity as a form of payment in early medieval England

48 Myth of the *Mayflower*
James Evans peels back the mythology surrounding the *Mayflower*'s journey to America, 400 years after it set sail

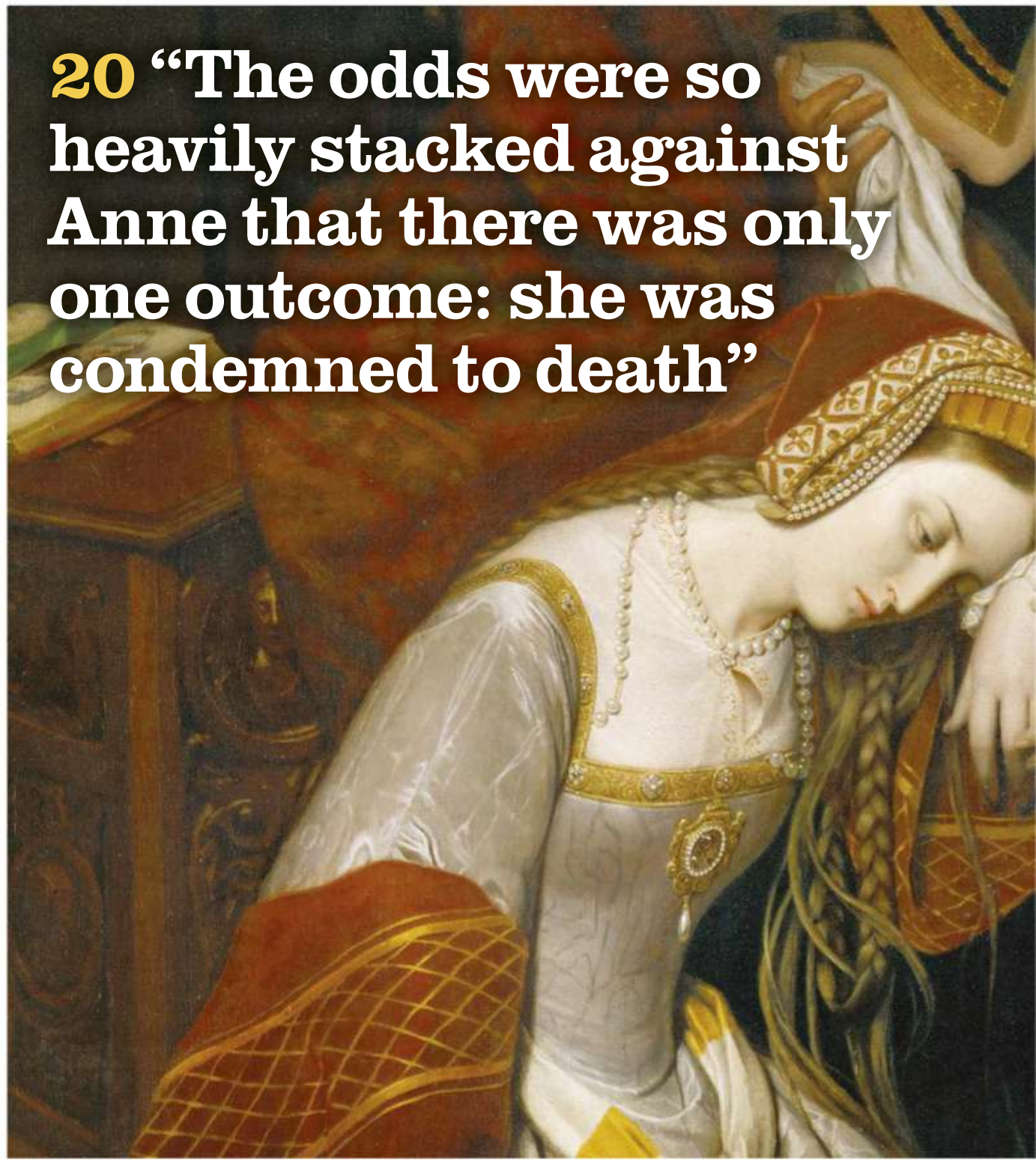
54 Nuclear panic
Taras Young shines a spotlight on Britain's haphazard response to the possibility of nuclear war in the 1980s

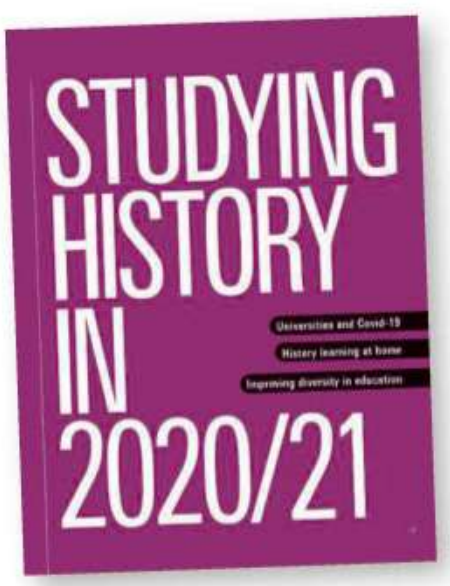


48 Does **the *Mayflower*** myth match the reality?

60 Isabel Wilkerson discusses caste's role in American history

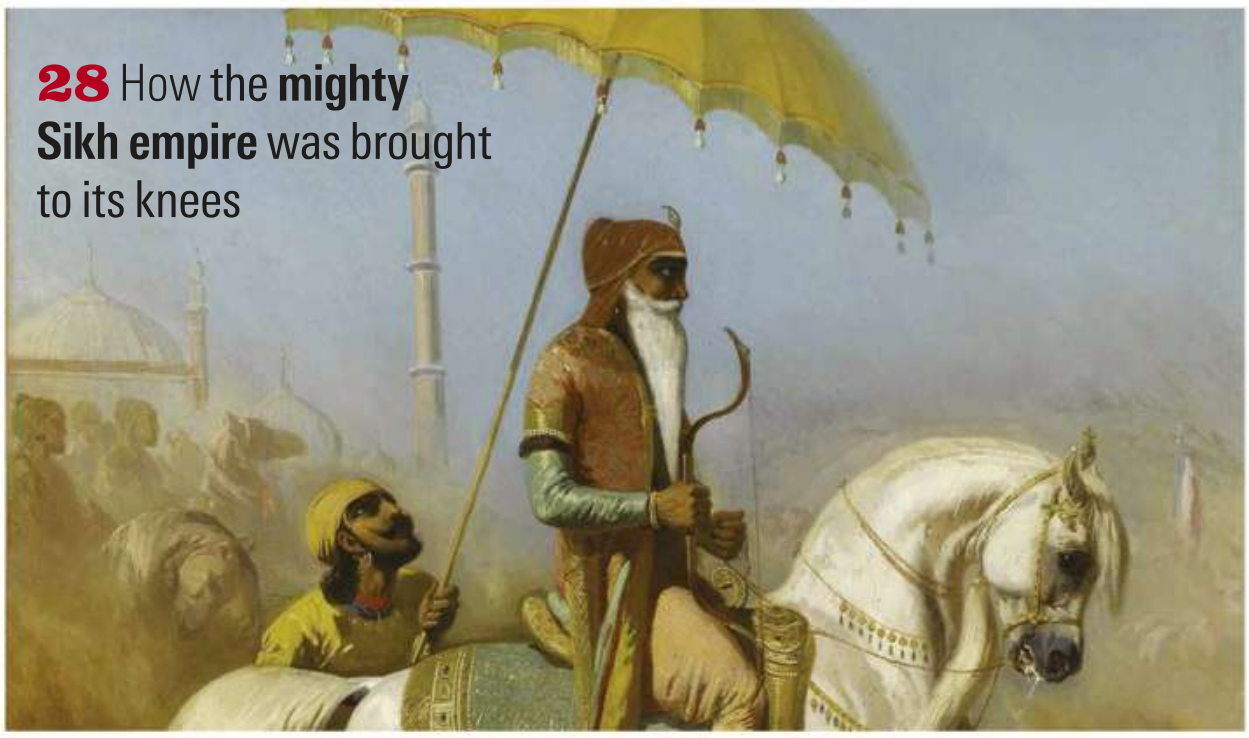
ALAMY/AKG-IMAGES





PLUS How **Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter are shaping education,** in our supplement

43 Discover why many medieval Europeans paid their rents with eels



28 How the **mighty Sikh empire** was brought to its knees

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

54 How Britain coped with the constant threat of a **nuclear apocalypse** in the 1980s

35 The **overlooked African cleric** who brought better education to Anglo-Saxon England

EVERY MONTH

This month in history

7 **History news**
11 **Michael Wood** on the 'life in the UK' history test
12 **Anniversaries**
16 **David Olusoga's Hidden Histories**

18 Letters

40 **Q&A** Your history questions answered

Books

60 **Interview:** Isabel Wilkerson argues a caste system took root in North America when it was first colonised – and that it still shapes US society today
64 New history **books reviewed**

Encounters

72 **Diary:** What to watch and listen to this month

79 **Prize crossword**

82 **My history hero** Fergal Keane chooses Jawaharlal Nehru

26 Subscribe

Get **three issues for £5*** when you take out a subscription today

BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR PARANOIA
WHY ARMAGEDDON STALKED THE 1980s
HISTORY
ANNE BOLEYN'S FINAL BATTLE
The dramatic last moments of a queen's life

*Available to UK Direct Debit orders only.

USPS Identification Statement BBC HISTORY (ISSN 1469-8552) (USPS 024-177) October 2020 is published 13 times a year under licence from BBC Studios by Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4ST, UK. Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.

THE SPECTATOR

Get three months for free – plus a free pen

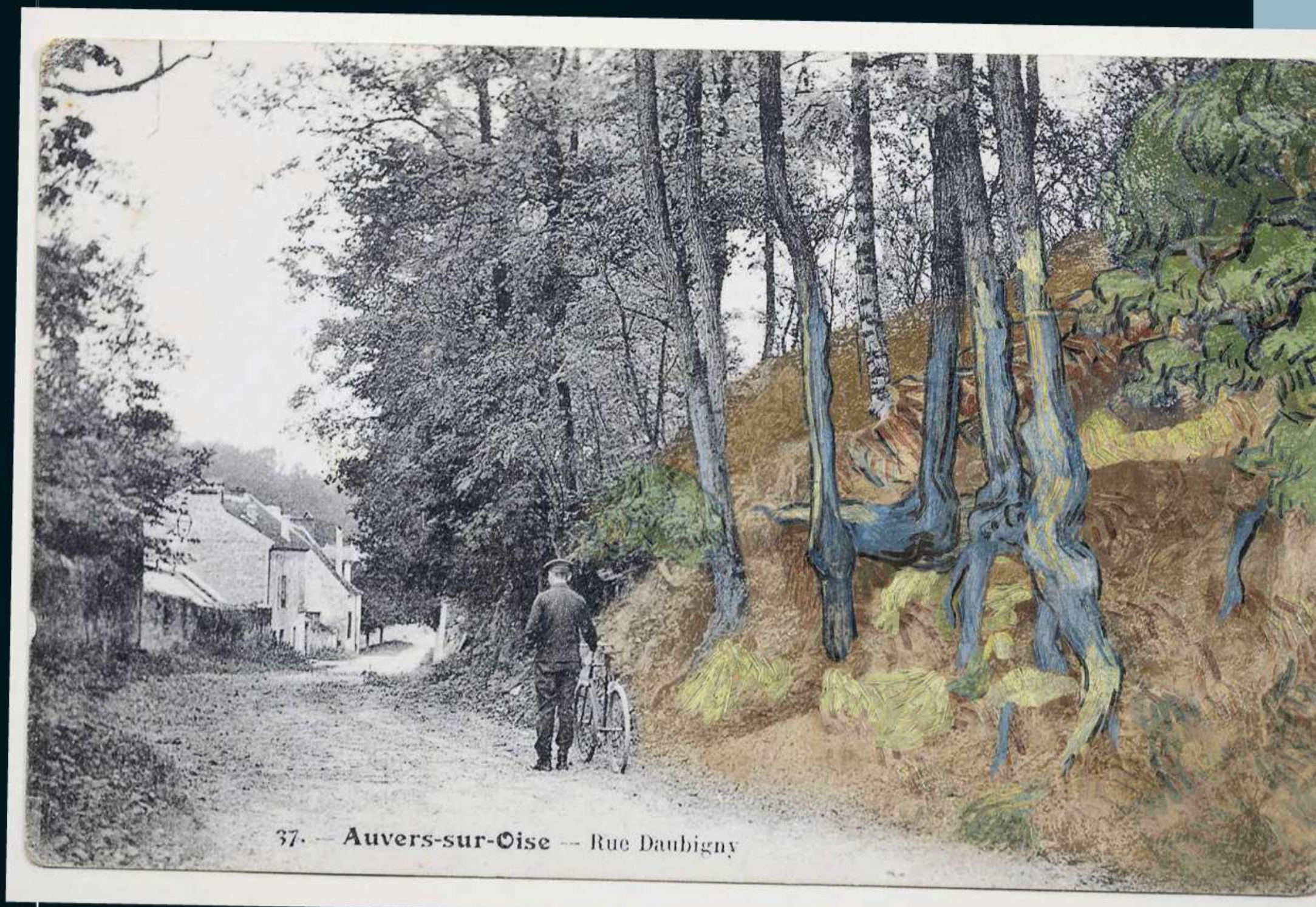
With Britain emerging from lockdown to economic uncertainty and a fast approaching Brexit date, get the inside track from Westminster's best-informed journalists. Or, take a break from it all with books and arts reviews from world-renowned critics and writers.

Start your free trial today

spectator.co.uk/history 0330 333 0050 quote code A576C

No commitment. Cancel any time. UK offer only. Terms apply. Go to spectator.co.uk/terms for full details.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



ARTHÉNON-VAN GOGH MUSEUM

EYE-OPENER

Landscape history

This composite image shows a photo from an early 20th-century postcard and what's thought to be Vincent van Gogh's final painting. As their similarity suggests, the two are thought to depict the same scene.

It's the first time that a likely location has been suggested for *Tree Roots*, which the Dutch painter was working on at the time of his death in 1890. The connection was made by Wouter van der Veen, scientific director of the French organisation Institut Van Gogh, and the postcard's caption reveals it to show trees on a bank near the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, on the outskirts of Paris. It's just 150 metres away from an inn at which van Gogh is known to have stayed for the final 70 days of his life.

Bert Maes, a specialist in historical vegetation, agreed that it's "highly plausible" that the painting's location has been correctly identified – and, indeed, the main tree trunk it depicts can still be seen at the site.

Have a story? Please email Matt Elton at matt.elton@immediate.co.uk

TALKING POINTS

The shadow of empire

A recent BBC radio programme exploring the morality and legacy of the British empire kickstarted an impassioned online debate. **ANNA WHITELOCK** followed its twists and turns

A recent episode of BBC Radio 4's long-running debate series *The Moral Maze* on the morality of the British empire (available to listen to on BBC Sounds) prompted an impassioned discussion which extended far beyond the programme.

Kim A Wagner (@KimAtiWagner) tweeted: "If you wouldn't do a programme on the morality of Nazi Germany, you shouldn't be doing it on the British empire. It is analytically so incredibly inept and could only have been conceived by someone profoundly ignorant about history." Yet, others were less sure whether the underlying premise was necessarily wrong. **Samir Puri** (@purisamir1) responded directly: "This kind of relativisation is not helpful… You are comparing 12 years of Nazi Germany to circa five centuries of British empire. Different spans of time give rise to moral questions of a different nature." As **Joshua Niecho** (@JoshNeicho) put it: "Isn't the point of *The Moral Maze* to include people with very different ideological convictions, ideally including those you as a listener passionately disagree with – and might think 'evil'?"

Questions of relativism gave way to issues of perspective. **Banksy bro** (@yardain) commented: "Living in India for five years has brought me in contact with a good number of Indians who look back to the Raj with a bitter nostalgia of sorts… friends and sources who have made this argument tend to come from the middle and upper class – but *is* this simply an inaccurate romantic rehabilitation of the Raj?" **Thomas Thorpe** (@Greasy GrassI876) added: "Moral GB imperialism is not a myth. It was the motivating spirit of many, and contemporary records are filled with evidence. You might not like it now, but that doesn't mean it wasn't true at the time." **Ash Bhardwaj** (@AshBhardwaj) was more categorical. "It was not the 'morally good' force that it's claimed to be," he remarked. "Many of the power structures and imbalances of today are descended from it."

Join the debate at **twitter.com/historyextra**

Thomas Thorpe, commenting again, maintained the need for nuance. "Difficult to find anything lasting a significant period of time that doesn't have ambiguities and complexities. GB empire ended long ago; if people wish to right perceived wrongs, energy is better directed at current entities." However, **Tom Knight** (@Tom_Scribbler), along with many others, made the point that "Our history lessons teach us that we went out into the world, civilised it, and gave it back with a minimum of fuss when asked politely. It is completely divorced from reality."

Indeed, as Ash Bhardwaj responded: "GB stacks up well if you ignore: Mau Mau; partition; genocide in Australia; Boer concentration camps; Opium Wars, etc. The nuance is that this is never taught in school, but the abolition of slavery is." That may be a challenge and opportunity on which all could agree.

Empire officials and rulers gather for tea in India, 1875. The empire's morality, and the way it's understood today, prompted Twitter debate

"The British empire was not the 'morally good' force that it's claimed to be"

Mark Ormrod, who died in August, was "a genuinely kind and friendly man, as well as a great academic"

OBITUARY

Mark Ormrod (1957–2020)

The medieval historian and researcher Mark Ormrod, who had a distinguished career at the University of York, has died following a long illness. He was 62.

Ormrod, who completed a doctorate at the University of Oxford in 1984, worked at the University of Sheffield and Queens University Belfast before joining York in 1990. Over the following decades he held positions including director of the Centre for Medieval Studies and head of the department of history, and in 2009 he became the first dean of the new Faculty of Arts and Humanities. His work on the Middle Ages explored such diverse areas as 15th-century immigration and the role of women in governance, and his books include a major 2011 biography of Edward III. Although he retired his university post in 2017, he continued to publish and carry out research, and his final book was submitted to his publisher just 10 days before his death.

"Professor Mark Ormrod was a magnificent medieval historian whose work touched on many areas," said Dave Musgrove, content director of *BBC History Magazine*. "He wrote for the magazine several times, appeared on our podcasts, and spoke at our events. He was always happy to help us out when we needed information or guidance about medieval features we were working on, and was a genuinely kind and friendly man, as well as a great academic. He will be much missed by the many medievalists he has worked with, mentored and inspired."

GETTY IMAGES/JOHN HOULIHAN-WITNESS

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**

Stone clue helps solve long-standing Stonehenge mystery

The origin of the stones used to construct Stonehenge has long been a mystery – but now experts have new answers thanks to the results of a two-year investigation.

The breakthrough came after a sample of a Stonehenge stone, removed during excavations in 1958, was returned last year. That sample, and standing 'sarsen' stones at the site, were analysed to confirm that most shared a similar chemical makeup and likely origin. Analysis of the sample was then compared with sarsens at 20 locations in southern England, with the results indicating that the origin of 50 of Stonehenge's 52 sarsens was probably West Woods near the Wiltshire town of Marlborough – 15 miles from Stonehenge.

"This is a really significant discovery," said archaeologist Mike Pitts. "With Stonehenge archaeology, the focus so far has been largely on bluestones, which are the small stones that come from Wales. We've known which part of Wales these come from, more or less, since the 1920s. All this time, we had no idea – in terms of actual evidence – where the sarsens came from."

Analysis of this metre-long core, taken from one of Stonehenge's standing stones, revealed vital clues about their provenance

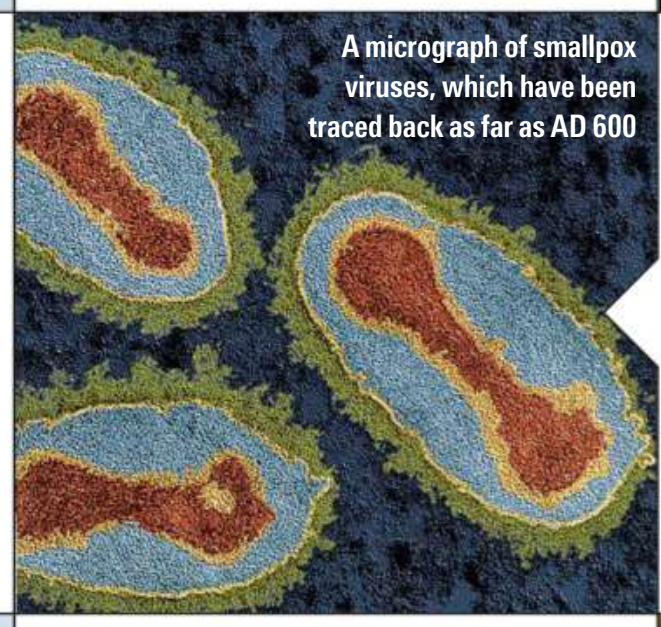
UK citizenship test misleading on slavery, experts argue

Historical information provided to people applying for UK citizenship is "fundamentally misleading and demonstrably false", a group of academics have claimed. The 181 signatories to a letter to the Historical Association journal criticised sections on the British empire and the abolition of slavery. A Home Office statement argued that the guide is a "starting point" whose contents are constantly under review.
For Michael Wood's view, see page 11.

A map showing the British empire in 1902. Historians have criticised its portrayal in the 'Life in the UK' test

Tools suggest humans reached Americas earlier than thought

Scientific dating of stone tools found in a cave in Mexico suggests that people lived there 33,000 years ago – around 15,000 years earlier than humans were previously thought to have inhabited the Americas. The findings, published in *Nature*, also suggest that the high-altitude cave was occupied for a period of at least 20,000 years. The issue of when humanity reached the American continent is hotly contested, and debate has already begun about the claims' validity.



A micrograph of smallpox viruses, which have been traced back as far as AD 600

DNA shows 'earliest smallpox'

Evidence of smallpox has been found in human remains dating from between AD 600 and 1050, up to seven centuries before the previous earliest-known case. Researchers discovered DNA traces of the disease in the teeth and bones of 11 people from Denmark and Russia, although it's not clear if it caused their deaths. The fact that the region's Viking people were known for international trade and warfare suggests that the infection may have been widespread in northern Europe at the time.

Tools found at Chiquihuite Cave in Mexico may change our understanding of human settlement of the Americas

Peat-bog remains under threat

Due to their low oxygen levels, peat bogs are inhospitable to microbes – and, as such, are effective at preserving human remains. It's a trait that has contributed to many key archaeological discoveries – yet a new study reveals this property seems to be decreasing. Experts compared finds made in the 1940s and 70s with those of recent years, and the latter of these bore signs of greater degradation. It's thought increased excavation and farming, as well as climate change, may explain the shift. H

A statue of Tollund man, a so-called 'bog body' found in Denmark. Such remains may be increasingly at risk

ENGLISH HERITAGE/GETTY IMAGES/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/REUTERS

Winston Churchill greets US president Harry Truman, 1952. Recently uncovered records suggest that Churchill was willing to diverge considerably from US foreign policy

Churchill 'considered nuclear attack' on the USSR

The statesman was prepared to deploy extreme measures against the forces of communism, new research reveals. By **MATT ELTON**

Winston Churchill contemplated deploying a nuclear attack against Soviet cities in 1951, according to the author of a new study.

A cache of New York Times Company documents, uncovered by University of Exeter historian Richard Toye, detail meetings held between the British politician and US newspaper executives throughout the 1940s and 50s. In April 1951, Churchill – who was then out of office, but had hopes of returning to government – met with *New York Times* general manager Julius Ochs Adler. In a lengthy conversation, he repeatedly returned to the subject of his plans should he be re-elected as prime minister.

Adler later recalled Churchill's proposals for his approach to the Soviet Union: "If he could secure the agreement of [the US] government, [Churchill said] he would lay down certain conditions to Russia in the form of an ultimatum," Adler wrote. "Upon their refusal, the Kremlin should be informed that, unless they reconsidered, we would atom-bomb one of 20 or 30 cities. Simultaneously, we should warn them it was imperative that the civilian population of each city be immediately evacuated. He believed that they would again refuse to consider our terms. Then we should bomb one of the targets, and if necessary, additional ones. Such panic would ensue, certainly by the third attack – not only among the Russian people but within the Kremlin – that our terms would be met."

The potential for such hardline measures was not restricted to the Soviet Union, either. When questioned about his stance on communist China, Churchill embraced the possibility of adopting confrontational tactics such as "bombing bases in China, and troop concentrations north of the Yalu [river, dividing China from North Korea]". Adler recalled that, as he listed such proposals, "[Churchill] readily assented, but when [the proposal of withdrawing from] Hong Kong was reached, he then said 'yes, even Hong Kong, if necessary'". Toye believes this is because, had the west bombed China, Hong Kong would have been indefensible against Chinese attack – and a temporary strategic withdrawal would have been needed.

This aggressive approach to China would have seen Britain diverge sharply from the less interventionist US president Harry Truman. The fact that Churchill was willing to distance himself from US policy suggests that he believed Britain still had the power to carve out its own place on the world stage.

"Churchill made these remarks about Russia as late as 1951, when the Soviets were known to have their own nuclear arsenal"

Thinking the unthinkable

As Toye points out, Churchill's comments on China are perhaps more surprising than those regarding the Soviet Union, about which he had earlier made similar remarks in private. Yet the fact he continued to make these remarks as late as 1951, when the Soviets were known to have developed a nuclear bomb, adds to their weight. And, despite the fact that Churchill didn't adopt these strategies upon re-election as prime minister in October 1951, the proposals still reveal much about wider political attitudes. "Churchill did not bomb Russia or China when he returned to power – in fact, he launched into a failed attempt to pursue detente with the Soviet Union," said Toye. "But his comments remind us that, with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a few years before, pre-emptive nuclear warfare was by no means 'unthinkable' at this time."

They also, Toye argues, tell us something about Churchill himself. "The remarks show that, whereas we know an awful lot about Churchill's views of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and a range of other nations, his attitude to China has hardly been explored at all. This is not to say that it was a fundamental reference point in his thinking at all times, but he certainly had views on China and was obliged to engage with Chinese issues at many times throughout his career.

"If these comments had become public at the time, there would have been a major scandal that might well have hurt Conservative election chances. He was either reckless, or had an extraordinary trust that what he had said would be kept confidential."

GETTY IMAGES

MICHAEL WOOD ON...
THE 'LIFE IN THE UK' BRITISH HISTORY TEST

"We should keep rewriting history: our 'island story' is not set in stone"

I had made up my mind not to talk about the 'Life in the UK' British history test. Earlier this summer, 181 historians and authors had their say about its factual inaccuracies; about the lack of social history; the omission of black history; the downplaying of Britain's role in the slave trade. But this, in a real sense, represents the 'official' narrative of our history. When the prime minister said, in response to the fall of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, "we cannot pretend to have a different history", we have to assume that this is what he means.

It all jogged a memory. In 2011, I did a talk at a history conference about one of our TV series, in which we took a single village, Kibworth in Leicestershire, through British history. This was history seen through a single community: bottom up, not top down; the people, not the rulers.

At the time, the new Conservative-led coalition government was revising the history curriculum: they'd done the same after the 1979 election, then rejecting the 'Marxist' approach of EP Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm and Rodney Hilton, which had been so important in my student days.

Government officials sat-in on my talk but were unconvinced. A year or so later, in January 2013, the new citizenship test came out with an emphasis on history, giving an – at times eye-opening – prominence to the achievements of the empire. You'd think that the British stood alone in the Second World War – when actually we had the wealth and manpower of the empire behind us. It spoke of there having been "for the most part, an orderly transition from empire to Commonwealth" (Really? Indian partition? Kenya? Biafra?). At the time, I put it to the back of my mind, mistakenly as it now turns out. This summer the government refused a request to talk about black history on the curriculum. It bears repetition: this is now the official vision of UK history.

I have two big issues with the test. First, the colonised themselves are not seen as actors in our history. Second, the collective action of the British people themselves is ignored. A central idea in our series on Kibworth was that great change in history also comes from below. In Britain progress has come from an often contentious relationship between rulers and ruled over hundreds of years. Universal suffrage is a case in point – votes for women were fully achieved less than a century ago.

And, of course, there are battles to be won. There are still huge inequalities: half of all the land of England is owned by less than 1 per cent of the population; discrimination against black people is starkly underlined by Covid 19; the first-past-the-post parliamentary system is, many feel, no longer fit for purpose.

Our liberties (as they stand in 2020) were not benevolently handed down by the rulers. They were hard won by the people, from the Levellers and the Chartists to the Suffragettes and 20th-century reformers. Our island story, then, (to coin a phrase!) is a dialectic. To suggest otherwise is either ignorance – or deliberate ideology.

A mature democracy depends on the *informed* consent of the electorate, and it is vital that the disputed nature of our history is understood as such. It's not about 'balance' – that's not how history works. Opposed views are the point: encouraging realism about our past, judgment, critical thinking. That's also what makes history such a useful subject to teach.

This all emphasises the importance of history in shaping a nation. And the importance of establishing a shared past, however contentious, which changes as more is discovered, as new perceptions develop. History is never fixed, always in the making, never made. But it is always made by us.

The great classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff said that when the ancient Greeks wanted to summon the spirits of the dead, they made a ritual sacrifice, giving "blood for the ghosts". History also raises ghosts. But when we imagine the spirits of the past alive again, one thing should never be forgotten. What we see is the product of *our* minds. The dead only come to life animated by our breath, by our imagination. It's we who make the past come to life. And the vision changes depending on who does the spirit-raising. So we must keep rewriting history: that is the name of the game. And don't pretend there aren't different histories. H

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

BBC

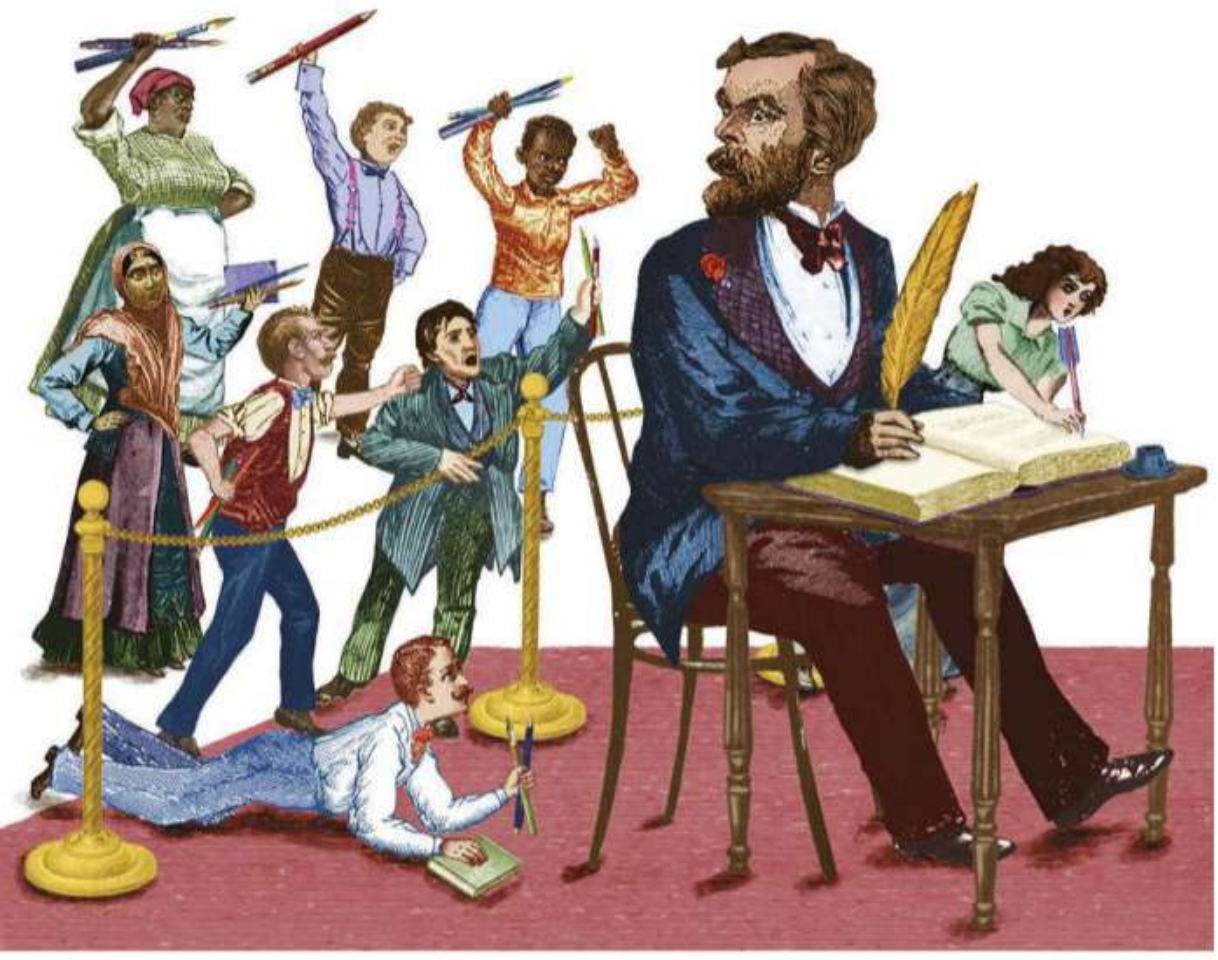


ILLUSTRATION BY **FEMKE DE JONG**

ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place in October in history

2 OCTOBER 1501

A Spanish princess joins the Tudor dynasty

Catherine of Aragon battles storms and bad omens before landing in England

In the spring of 1501, Catherine of Aragon took a last look at the minarets of Granada. For years she had been betrothed to Arthur Tudor, heir to the throne of England. And now that she was almost 16, her parents had run out of excuses to delay the inevitable.

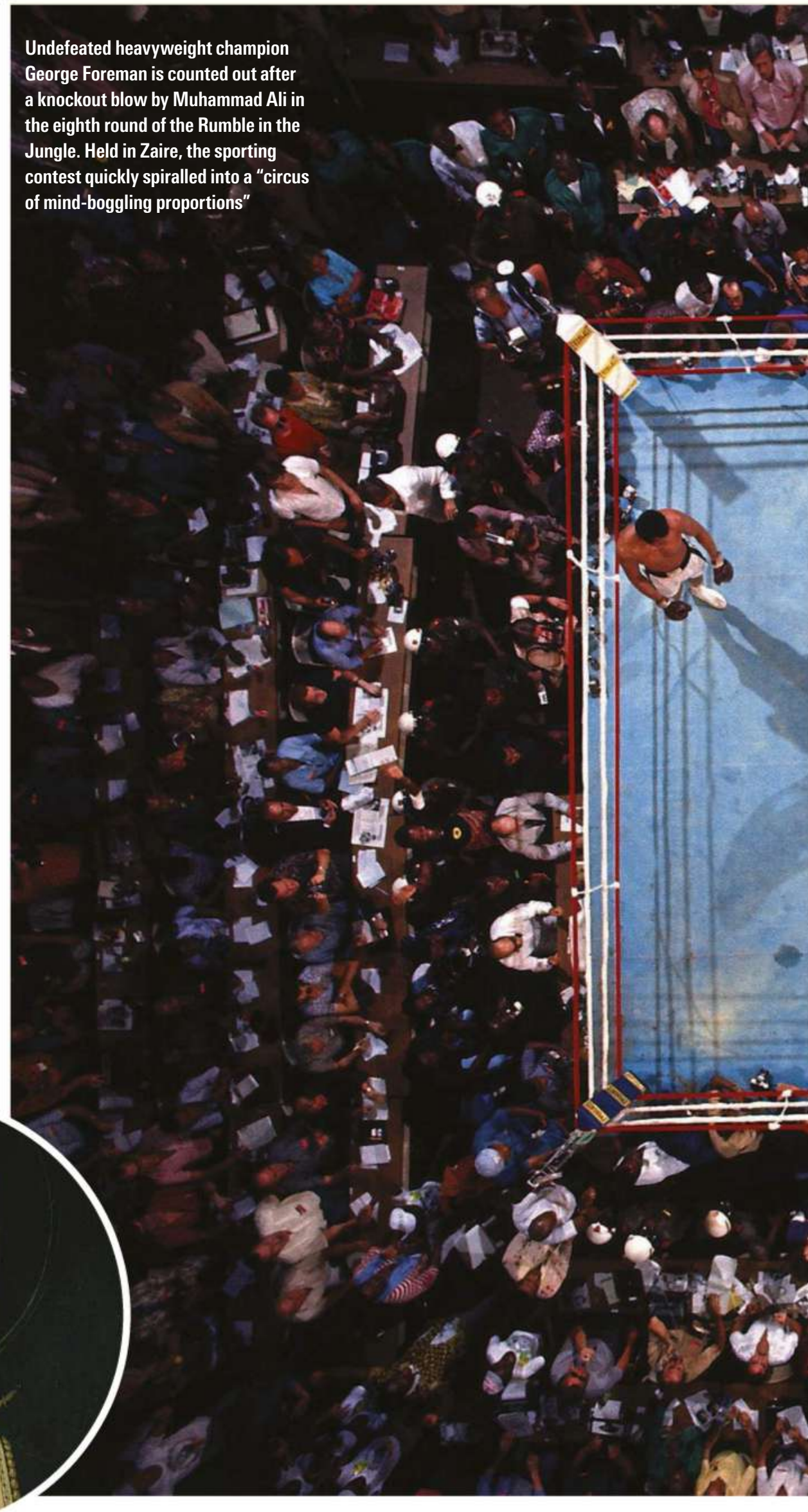
It took Catherine's travelling party three months to reach the port of La Coruña. But when her ship cast off, a ferocious storm blew up in the Bay of Biscay. Thrown off course, the captain was forced to put in at Laredo, further along the coast.

Later, people said this had been an omen. Even Catherine, they claimed, had wondered aloud if the storm was a warning from God of some calamity ahead. Still, storms in the Bay of Biscay were hardly unusual, even in summer. And on the evening of 27 September, the gales died down and Catherine's captain was ready to set sail for a second time.

Once again, however, the weather seemed to be against them. As the storm raged, Catherine was racked by terrible seasickness. So were her young companions, who sank to their knees in prayer. As one recalled, "it was impossible not to be frightened".

But on the afternoon of 2 October 1501, the princess's ship sailed into Plymouth. Already a crowd was waiting, and as she stepped onto the quayside, cheers rang around the harbour. "She could not have been received with greater rejoicing," wrote her doctor a few days later, "had she been the Saviour of the world."

A portrait of a young woman thought to be Catherine of Aragon, painted a couple of years after she arrived in England



Undefeated heavyweight champion George Foreman is counted out after a knockout blow by Muhammad Ali in the eighth round of the Rumble in the Jungle. Held in Zaire, the sporting contest quickly spiralled into a "circus of mind-boggling proportions"

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

5 OCTOBER 1910

Two days after revolution has erupted in Lisbon, news breaks that **Portugal's last king**, Dom Manuel II, has fled the city to the countryside. At nine o'clock that morning, with crowds pouring onto the streets and the city in ferment, the rebels proclaim Portugal's first republic.

30 OCTOBER 1974

Ali delivers a knockout blow

One billion viewers are gripped as the boxer fells Foreman in the Rumble in the Jungle

There will never be another event like the Rumble in the Jungle. Held in Kinshasa, Zaire – now the Democratic Republic of Congo – it saw the undefeated heavyweight boxing champion, George Foreman, challenged by the former champion, Muhammad Ali. But the sporting clash was only part of the story.

Formerly the Belgian Congo, Zaire had only been independent since 1960. Its military strongman, General Mobutu, had seized power with strong American support, and was keen to present himself as Africa's leading actor on the world stage. This was a chance to cement his regime's image and stability, and Mobutu struck a deal with the controversial promoter Don King. The purse was set at a record-breaking $5m for each fighter.

What followed was a circus of mind-boggling proportions. The fight was preceded by a three-day music festival starring James Brown and BB King. Both Foreman and Ali spent weeks training in Zaire, acclimatising to the intense heat. But they encountered very different reactions. The 25-year-old Foreman never seemed comfortable, even though he was a prohibitive favourite. In contrast, the 32-year-old Ali, who had refused to fight for his country in Vietnam, was regarded as a local champion. "Ali, boma ye!" crowds chanted: "Ali, kill him!"

Due to the demands of US television, the fight itself did not begin until four o'clock in the morning. The fighters entered to a tumultuous reception. As they climbed into the ring, an estimated 1 billion people were watching worldwide.

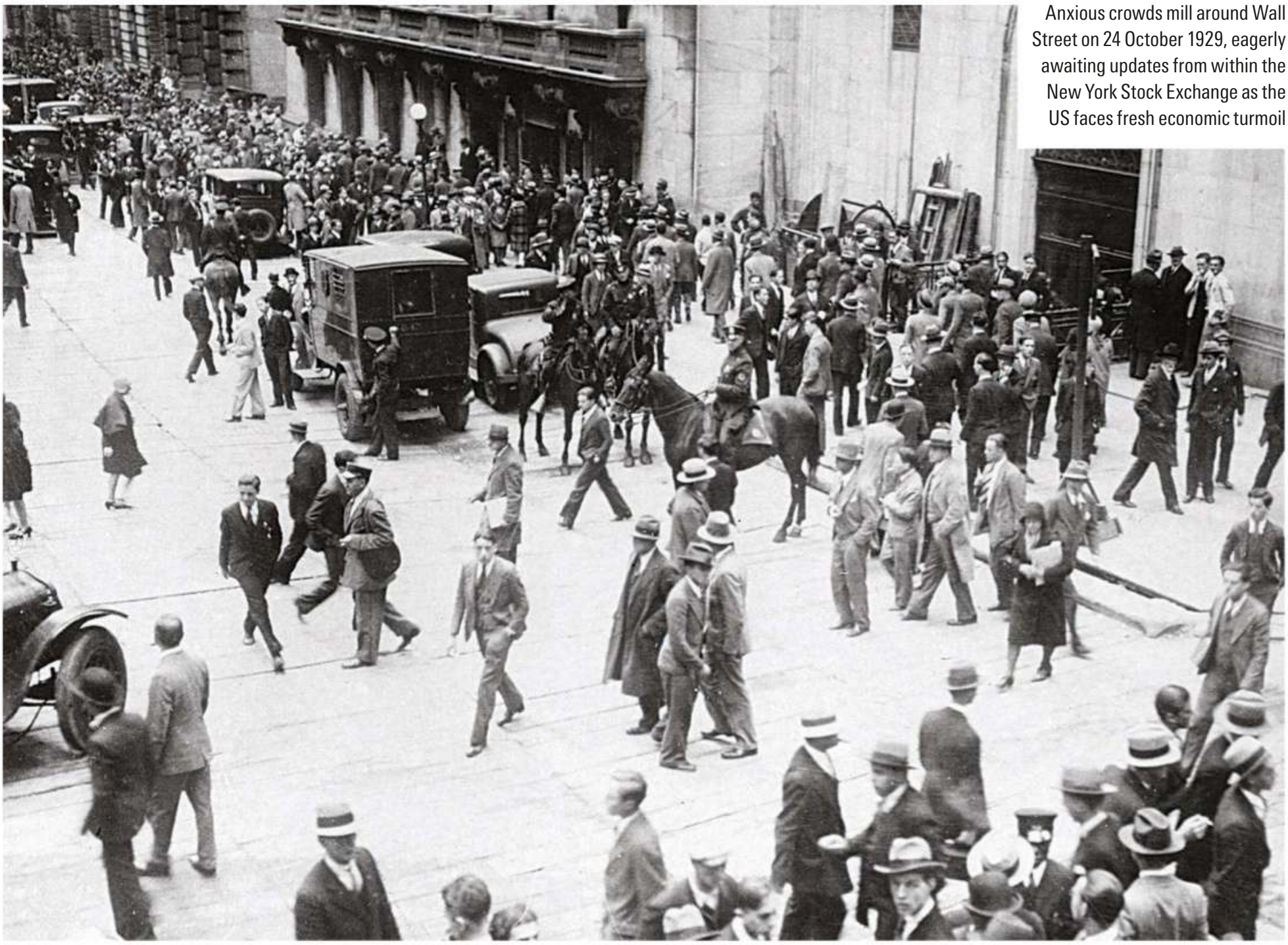
For eight rounds, Foreman hurled punch after punch at Ali, who kept to the ropes, allowing his opponent to exhaust himself. Then Ali struck, opening up with a devastating combination. After Foreman had been down for eight seconds, the referee called a halt. "Ali leaped in triumph," said the next day's *Times*, "and then fell, pushed by a mob invading the ring before he sat on his haunches while pandemonium raged above him."

19 OCTOBER 1216

After a trudge across east England, during which he lost his treasure in the Wash, **King John dies** at Newark Castle. Rumours spread that he stuffed himself with too many peaches, but the real cause of death was probably more mundane: dysentery.

10 OCTOBER 732

A Frankish army under Charles Martel defeats an invading Umayyad Arab army at **the battle of Tours** (left). The Arab advance into north-western Europe is checked, and they never regain their momentum.



Anxious crowds mill around Wall Street on 24 October 1929, eagerly awaiting updates from within the New York Stock Exchange as the US faces fresh economic turmoil

24 OCTOBER 1929

The American economy comes crashing down

Traders are sent into a frenzy as Wall Street collapses

It was the morning of Thursday 24 October 1929, and Wall Street was packed. The New York Stock Exchange was not due to open until ten, but already the sidewalks were crowded with people, their faces anxious, the atmosphere crackling with nervous excitement.

The previous afternoon's trading had ended with a storm of selloffs, and the mood was febrile. After years of surging stock prices, the Roaring Twenties were ending amid uncertainty. There had been hurricanes in Florida. Rumours swirled of bad land deals, and falling car and steel production. There was even talk that the great bull market, which depended heavily on cheap credit, was about to tumble.

Nobody, however, anticipated what came next. When trading opened on Black Thursday, the market plunged by more than 10 per cent in the first few moments. People were so desperate to sell that the ticker tape machine, on which the big brokerage houses relied for information, was running hours behind. "Dazed brokers waded through a sea of paper clutching frightened investors' orders to 'sell at any price'," reported one paper. "At the peak of the panic-selling, the market ceased to function as such and turned into a mad clamour of salesmen looking for non-existent buyers."

Yet not everybody saw Black Thursday as a watershed moment. President Hoover was convinced that the crash was merely a storm in a teacup. "The fundamental business of the country, that is the production and distribution of commodities," he explained in a statement, "is on a sound and prosperous basis."

And the *New York Daily Investment News* assured its readers that the crash was merely a passing squall. "Stock Market Crisis Over", read its headline the next day. "We have seen the worst," explained its resident expert. "Heaven forbid that anything worse than yesterday on the Stock Exchange should be possible." He was, of course, in for a shock.

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

This porcelain plate depicts Wang Mang fleeing rebels shortly before his death, riding atop a mythical beast called a *qilin*

6 OCTOBER AD 23

China's usurping emperor Wang Mang is ousted

Unpopular and out of touch, the leader is butchered by rebels in his imperial palace

By the autumn of AD 23, Wang Mang had been emperor of China for 14 years. Although related to the imperial family, he had never actually been in line to the throne, having seized it from the child Ruzi Ying. At first, all the signs were promising. Wang was a shrewd and experienced man, steeped in Confucian learning. He had served as commander of the armed forces. And he had visionary ideas about the policies China needed, from land reform to a new currency. What could possibly go wrong?

But by October of that year, the answer was clear: everything. Blighted by economic turmoil and peasant rebellions, Wang's regime was in deep trouble. Having once been famous for his work ethic, the 67-year-old retreated to his grand imperial palace with his magicians, his nine wives and his 27 concubines. But he could not keep reality out forever.

On 4 October, a rebel army stormed the capital, Chang'an. The next morning, they burst into the palace. Wang took refuge in the highest tower, defended by his guards. But there, after a stretch of bitter fighting, his life reached its blood-soaked climax. His head was cut off and his body torn to pieces, while rebel soldiers literally fought and died to get hold of the scraps. Eventually his head was delivered to the rebel commanders, who stuck it on a wall. H

Dominic Sandbrook's latest book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane, 2019)

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER. . .

The peaceful reunification of a divided Germany

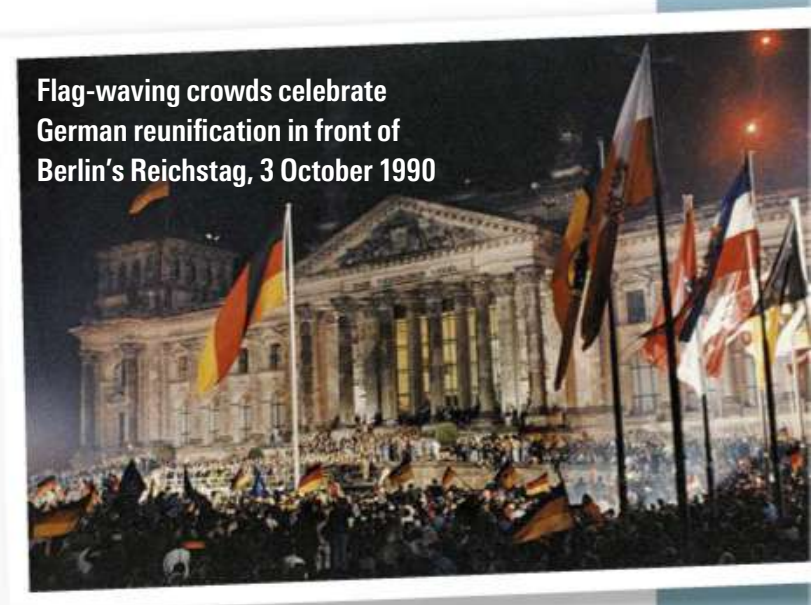
BY **KRISTINA SPOHR**

On 3 October 2020, Germany celebrates the 30th anniversary of its reunification. Like many historical events, this was believed impossible until it was actually achieved. After 1945, Germany had been divided into two states because the Soviet Union and the western powers could not agree on how to prevent it becoming a threat once again. During the Cold War the division became a fixity, marking the boundary between two global systems. Berlin, though in East Germany, was also divided between the two blocs, cemented by the wall built in 1961.

By the 1980s, however, the Soviet system was struggling. Mikhail Gorbachev initiated reforms that gradually relaxed Soviet rule over eastern Europe, and by spring 1989, Poland and Hungary were engulfed in revolution. The GDR (German Democratic Republic) now found itself in an awkward position. The regime in East Berlin set its face against change. But many East Germans had already begun to exploit the loosening of Soviet control, escaping across the Hungarian border to the west, knowing that they had an automatic right to citizenship in West Germany. Unlike any other eastern-bloc state, the GDR faced the existential challenge of a prosperous western neighbour sharing the same history, culture and ethnicity.

"Politicians had always talked hazily about unification, but there was no blueprint"

By November 1989 mass demonstrations were making East Germany ungovernable. But the regime, paralysed by confusion and uncertain of Soviet support, elected not to use military force against its own people. In a sequence of comical misunderstandings, a plan to relax travel restrictions led to the totally unexpected opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November. The world was stunned.



Flag-waving crowds celebrate German reunification in front of Berlin's Reichstag, 3 October 1990

On 28 November, West German chancellor Helmut Kohl announced his Ten Point programme for unification. West German politicians had always talked hazily about unification, yet there was no blueprint. Kohl was flying in the dark. His biggest achievement was to dispel fears of a 'Fourth Reich' that still troubled Germany's European partners. Rather than permitting an unpredictable egalitarian merger of the two states, Kohl opted for a "takeover" of the East by his Federal Republic. This won overwhelming support in East German elections of March 1990.

Kohl's policy had mixed consequences. The loss of East German statehood gave rise to a sense of lost identity that would endure. But the GDR's absorption into West Germany established international trust. This was deepened in the west by the inclusion of the enlarged German state into the European Community and Nato, and in the east through bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union, buying Gorbachev's assent through financial aid.

A fundamental reconfiguration of the European system was accomplished without war and bloodshed. Whatever the flaws in the new design, this was in itself a remarkable achievement. H

Kristina Spohr is author of *Post Wall, Post Square: Rebuilding the World After 1989* (William Collins, 2019)

HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

"Paraguay's child-soldiers fought with wooden sticks, painted as muskets"

Outside of South America – where it remains an open wound – the War of the Triple Alliance is largely forgotten. It lasted from 1864 to 1870 and pitted Paraguay against a coalition consisting of Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. By many measures, it counts among the most devastating wars of the 19th century.

The root cause of the War of the Triple Alliance was the disputed borders that the independent nations of South America inherited from the Spanish and Portuguese empires, from which they had won their independence. The immediate cause, however, was the policies of Francisco Solano López, the leader of Paraguay. In the 1860s, López catastrophically misread the balance of power in the region and over-played his hand. (Though the leaders of the Triple Alliance nations were far from blameless.)

López's willingness to risk war with his larger neighbours was founded on the fact that in the 1860s tiny Paraguay had the largest army in South America. But while this army of around 60,000 men looked impressive on the parade ground, it was a less potent force on the battlefield. Much of its weaponry was antiquated, and its leadership undermined by politically motivated purges.

In almost every respect the war between Paraguay and the Triple Alliance was a terrible mismatch. The combined population of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay was 25 times that of Paraguay. Yet even in the face of impossible odds, and with his country invaded, López remained unwilling to surrender or abdicate.

Under his leadership Paraguay attempted a form of total guerrilla war. Every eligible Paraguayan man was drafted into the army. Yet this mass levy barely enabled the generals to keep pace with a death toll that kept mounting after each lost battle. And drawing men from the countryside had another effect: it meant that the remaining farmers lacked the manpower to sow crops or gather harvests. As food supplies dwindled, huge numbers died of malnutrition or were left vulnerable to disease. Dysentery killed thousands, as did cholera and malaria.

When the supply of able-bodied Paraguayan men ran out, Lopez and his supporters did something shocking. Boys of between 9 and 15 years were conscripted. As the rapidly collapsing Paraguayan army could not arm these children, they were given wooden sticks, painted to resemble muskets and rifles, and thrown into battle. Some were said to have been given false beards.

Today, in modern Paraguay, Children's Day takes place on the anniversary of the battle of Acosta Ñu, a catastrophic, one-sided clash in which around 2,000 of López's child-soldiers were slaughtered by a Brazilian army that fought with horrific ruthlessness.

As the nation descended into ever deeper chaos, López came to believe himself the victim of a vast and elaborate conspiracy. Seeing traitors everywhere, he had thousands arrested and tortured, among them his own mother and sister. Those found guilty of betrayal included some of López's most committed supporters and peasant soldiers who had failed to carry out impossible orders. An estimated 700–800 Paraguayans were executed during the war, including López's own brother.

The war came to an end in March 1870 when López was killed at the battle of Cerro Corá. Utterly routed, Paraguay was forced to cede huge swathes of territory to the victorious alliance, and enemy troops occupied the nation for seven years after the war.

But what really shocked observers was the scale of the loss of life. Although the death toll of the conflict has been the focus of a long historical controversy, some estimates calculate that 60 per cent of the prewar Paraguay population, and 70 per cent of Paraguayan men, died during the war. One source suggests that only 29,000 Paraguayan men over the age of 15 survived the conflict. By some measures, Paraguay has never fully recovered from the devastation. H

David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. His series *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners* is currently available on BBC iPlayer

BBC

Catastrophic defeat
Paraguayans pictured during the War of the Triple Alliance, which may have cost the nation 60 per cent of its prewar population

PUBLIC DOMAIN–ARQUIVO NACIONAL COLLECTION

Red Cross ambulance drivers in France, WWI

150 Voices

MEHZEBIN ADAM, CURATOR OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES, SHARES HOW THE CHARITY IS MARKING ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A POIGNANT ONLINE EXHIBITION

The Red Cross movement began when Swiss humanitarian Henry Dunant called for a kinder world. Shocked by the suffering of wounded soldiers in the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in 1859, he urged all nations to create volunteer groups to provide impartial relief to the sick and wounded.

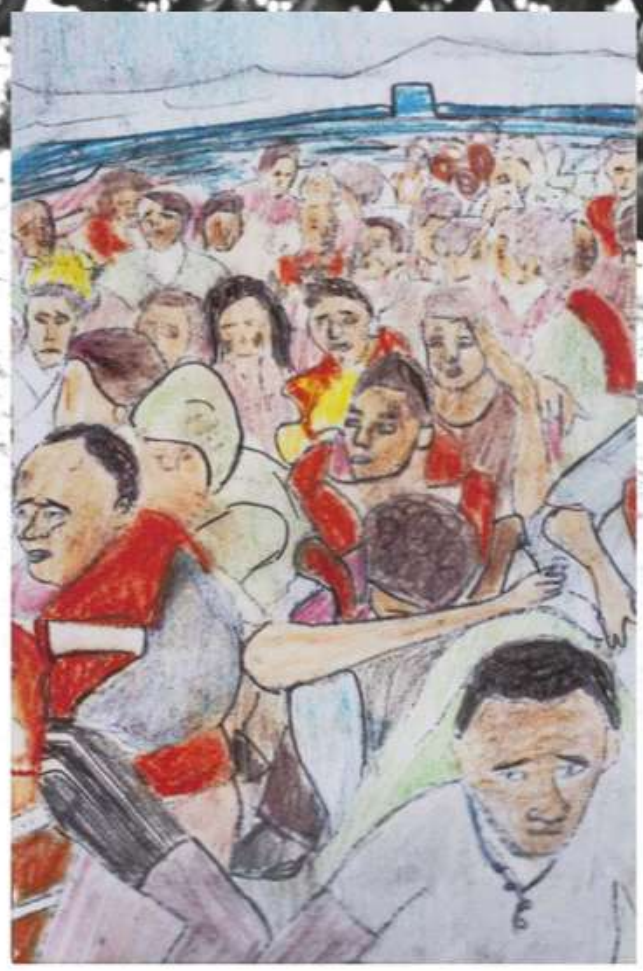
Following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the British Red Cross was formed on 4 August to provide relief to the sick and wounded soldiers on both sides of the conflict. The society was established based upon the rules of the Geneva Convention and joined the global Red Cross movement to work towards the shared goal of helping people in need, no matter who or where they are.

Now, to mark its 150-year legacy, the British Red Cross has launched 150 Voices – a moving online exhibition that celebrates the charity's history of connecting human kindness with human crisis. As part of the project, volunteers from around the UK helped to select 150 items from the British Red Cross Museum and Archives. Prince Charles gives a video introduction to the exhibition.

At a time when many museums are inaccessible due to the pandemic, this new online exhibition allows people to explore the British Red Cross Museum and Archives virtually and learn about the charity's 150 years of history. Visit the 150 Voices online exhibition at **redcross.org.uk/150voices**. Exhibition supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

THE FREE WILL SCHEME

The work carried out by the British Red Cross is as essential today as it was at the time of the 1918 influenza. Thanks to the support of people like you, the Red Cross is always ready to help those in crisis, whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street. By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave your own legacy to ensure the British Red Cross can continue to support vulnerable people – for the next 150 years and beyond.



^ Volunteer Mahdi Ali chose a contemporary artwork by a young refugee in the UK. "I was blown away by the colourful imagery used within an otherwise sombre drawing of an unforgettable day in this refugee's life," he said. "The artist has clearly illustrated her terrifying experience of fleeing a place she once called 'home'."

^ Daniella Dray, another volunteer, chose the illustrated triangular bandage from the 1940s. "I think it was a very good idea to print the instructions on the bandage itself! I was astounded that such a simple bandage could be used in so many different ways."

150 years the power of kindness

BritishRedCross

For more information about supporting the British Red Cross with a gift in your will and the Free Will scheme, visit redcross.org.uk/freewill or call 0300 500 0401

LETTERS

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Medieval values

I greatly enjoyed the History Extra podcast *Lionheart of Stone: the Medieval Statue Debate* (released 17 July) which highlighted the lack of discussion of medieval figures in current debates about historical statues, and explored the ways in which they represent the past and their relevance today.

Dr Simon John suggests that the 19th-century statue of 12th-century crusader-king Richard I outside of parliament in London (below left) is a symbol of Englishness: chivalry, monarchical authority and Christianity. I found it fascinating how John highlights the void between this idea of 'Englishness' and the reality of the diversity of the people of England and, more accurately, Great Britain that our parliament represents. As a medievalist, I think the Lionheart statue is a beautiful piece of art and symbolism. But is it still relevant to our values today? Should we bring statues of medieval figures more into the debate?

I asked these questions of my Instagram followers (*@molly_the_historian*) and received comments about Richard I and the uneasy topic of the crusades. When I asked whether statues of medieval figures should be included in the current debate, I was surprised that 77 per cent of people said no.

Perhaps more surprising – but arguably more reassuring for medievalists like myself – is that, when asked whether the statue of Richard I should remain outside parliament, 92 per cent said yes!

Therefore, although the podcast was highly enjoyable, I think it's safe to say that parliament's Richard I is safe from becoming like the Colston statue.

Molly Anderson, history undergraduate at Lancaster University, Hertfordshire

We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel** by Rachel Holmes. You can read our review of the book on page 64

Divisive figures

Regarding the current controversy over who should or should not be placed on a plinth in a public place, I would suggest that it is never a good idea to place *any* individual on a pedestal – either physically or metaphorically. No one, living or dead, is entirely good or bad: we are all merely human, with our strengths and weaknesses. A person's actions, well-considered at the time, may not transfer happily to another era. This was exemplified by a description of Edward Colston on the BBC news as "philanthropist and slave trader" – and however many statues are torn down or names changed, the people of Bristol will continue to be affected by this man's actions.

Might it not be better to commemorate events rather than people? The cast of Rodin's 19th-century statue *The Burghers of Calais* next to the houses of parliament in London comes to mind, and there are many more sculptures around the UK that highlight local history and ways of life in an uncontroversial way. I would also suggest that it might be aesthetically and morally better to create the sculpture at street level or on a low plinth, rather than raising the structure high above those who are meant to gain something from it, which could reinforce an adverse message.

If old memories and stories are erased, new ones emerge to take their place which are not necessarily 'correct' or 'better'. Neither 'good' nor 'bad' history should be manipulated to make us feel more comfortable; we must use all human experience to make moral progress.

Sarah Porterfield, Okehampton

Missing lessons

Like Mike Dickson (*Letters*, September) I studied the 18th century for my O and A level exams in the 1960s at a school in Bristol. The syllabus had strong political content but also socioeconomic topics including the agrarian and industrial revolutions and labour unrest. However, I am sure that the syllabus made no more than passing reference to slavery in the British colonies – and this in a school in Bristol, centre of the slave trade! There must have been resources available locally to carry out good historical investigations and bring the issue to the attention of aspiring students of history.

Richard Woodroofe, Westbury

Saved by the bomb

On 15 July 1945, aged 17, I volunteered for military service – the day before the secret Trinity test of a nuclear weapon (see *Hiroshima*, September). At the time, I anticipated war continuing for several years, with landings in Japan leading to an estimated million casualties. On 16 August that year, I joined the Colours, one day after the war ended. Now, at 92, I can reflect upon a long, productive and happy life, avoiding the fate of my eldest brother, killed on D-Day. I must confess that selfish instincts prevent too much reflection on the morality of using nuclear weapons against the initiators of the bloody Pacific war. My deepest philosophy is 'wasn't I lucky' – unlike the other 999,999 potential casualties.

Maj Gen Martin Sinnatt, Hampshire

Bad reputation

Reading Shushma Malik's article on Nero (*The Antichrist?,* August), I was struck by the comparisons we can draw between Nero and the historiography surrounding many other historical rulers. One is Richard III, who has been immortalised as a 'villain' since Shakespeare wrote his play. Both Richard and Nero were painted as villains by people who never actually met either of them – yet these 'fictitious' interpretations of both rulers are the ones that we are often taught.

Malik's assertion that we must "examine his actions in the context of his times" also reminded me of the reputation of 'bloody' Mary I. She was by no means the first or the last English monarch to burn people for religious heresy, but because the country returned to Protestantism with the accession of Elizabeth I, her reputation as a 'villain' has been passed down since. Malik highlighted how the arguments of Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio "made up a mere fraction of the accounts of Nero's life" – as Mary I's policy of burning Protestant heretics represents just a fraction of her reign. Looking at her as simply a murderer hides the fact that she was responsible for many naval reforms, the benefits of which Elizabeth reaped when the Spanish Armada invaded in 1588. Malik's article forces us to reconsider how we view some of the past's more controversial figures.

Jasper Hawkes, West Sussex

DREAMSTIME

An airman pictured in his Lancaster, May 1943. The lack of recognition for the role that such men played in the Second World War surprises reader Charles W Shay

Raise a glass to these heroes

I enjoyed the interview with John Nichol about his book on the role of Lancaster bombers in the Second World War and Bomber Command in general (*Books interview*, July). It was very informative about the bombers and the crews who served on them.

I was dismayed, however, to read that Bomber Command is still held in such low regard in the United Kingdom. Years ago, I read Max Hastings' wonderful 1979 book on Bomber Command and was disappointed to read of a similar attitude in Britain – and here it is again. The British people should take great pride in the RAF men who served their country so well during very trying times. The western world was fighting what was arguably the most sinister empire of modern times – and the British people were doing it alone for quite some time, until we on 'the other side of the pond' finally woke up.

As one who served his country honourably (or so I thought) during Vietnam, America's most unpopular war, I fully understand the feelings of Bomber Command veterans (although the Second World War cannot be compared to Vietnam). And though some in Britain still disparage Bomber Command's heroes, I raise my glass to them.

Charles W Shay, New York

WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words. **email:** *letters@historyextra.com* **Post:** Our office is currently closed so unfortunately we can only receive email communication at this time

The opinions expressed by our commentators are their own and may not represent the views of *BBC History Magazine* or the Immediate Media Company

GETTY IMAGES

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

Editor Rob Attar *robertattar@historyextra.com*
World history editor Matt Elton *mattelton@historyextra.com*
Production editor Spencer Mizen
Section editors Ellie Cawthorne and Jon Bauckham
Subeditor Rhiannon Davies
Picture editor Samantha Nott *samnott@historyextra.com*
Deputy picture editor Katherine Mitchell
Group art editor Susanne Frank
Senior deputy art editor Rachel Dickens
Art editor, special editions Sarah Lambert
Content director Dr David Musgrove
Digital editor Emma Mason *emmamason@historyextra.com*
Deputy digital editor Elinor Evans
Digital editorial assistant Rachel Dinning

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Advertising manager
Sam Jones 0117 300 8145
Sam.Jones@immediate.co.uk
Business development manager
Kate Chetwynd-Lawton 0117 300 8532
Brand sales executive
Max Spalton 0117 300 8530
Classified sales manager
Rebecca Janyshiwskyj
Classified sales executive
Alexander Armstrong 0117 300 8538
Alex.Armstrong@immediate.co.uk
Group direct marketing manager
Laurence Robertson 00353 5787 57444
Subscriptions director Jacky Perales-Morris
Subscriptions marketing manager
Natalie Lawrence
US representative Kate Buckley
buckley@buckleypell.com

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
PR manager Emma Cooney 0117 300 8507
Emma.Cooney@immediate.co.uk

SYNDICATION
Director of licensing & syndication Tim Hudson
International partners' manager Anna Brown

HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST
Podcast producer Ben Youatt
Podcast assistant Jack Bateman

PRODUCTION
Production director Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator Emily Mounter
Ad co-ordinator Jade O'Halloran
Ad designer Julia Young

IMMEDIATE MEDIA COMPANY
Commercial director Jemima Dixon
Managing director Andy Healy
Group managing director Andy Marshall
CEO Tom Bureau

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE
Founding editor Greg Neale

BBC STUDIOS, UK PUBLISHING
Managing Director, Consumer Products and Licensing Stephen Davies
Head of publishing Mandy Thwaites
Compliance manager Cameron McEwan
Chair, Editorial Review Boards Nicholas Brett
UK publishing coordinator Eva Abramik
(uk.publishing@bbc.com)

IMMEDIATE MEDIA CO

Vol 21 No 10 – October 2020
BBC History Magazine is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes.

BBC History Magazine was established to publish authoritative history, written by leading experts, in an accessible and attractive format. We seek to maintain the high journalistic standards traditionally associated with the BBC.

© Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited, 2020 – ISSN: 1469 8552
Not for resale. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without written permission. Every effort has been made to secure permission for copyright material. In the event of any material being used inadvertently, or where it proved impossible to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue. MSS, photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that *BBC History Magazine* and its agents do not accept liability for loss or damage to same. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher.

We abide by IPSO's rules and regulations. To give feedback about our magazines, please visit immediate.co.uk, email *editorialcomplaints@immediate.co.uk* or write to Katherine Conlon, Immediate Media Co., Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, London W6 7BT.

Immediate Media Company is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests. This magazine can be recycled, for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point.

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

ipso Regulated

abc Jan–Dec 2019 **93,931**

*Available to UK Direct Debit orders only.

ANNE BOLEYN' FINAL BATTLE

Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, famously lost her head at her husband's behest. **Tracy Borman**, the presenter of a new TV series on Anne's fall from grace, delves into the queen's dramatic final days

S

Borrowed time
Anne Boleyn – depicted here in a c1533–36 painting – fell foul of her husband, Henry VIII, and was the first anointed queen to be put to death in England

BRIDGEMAN

At nine o'clock on 15 May 1536, the Great Hall at the Tower of London – part of the now lost Tudor royal palace – was thronging with some 2,000 courtiers, clerics and lawyers, all gathered to witness the trial of the century. Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's notorious second wife, stood accused of adultery, incest and treason. It was the first time in history that a queen of England had been put on trial – and the proceedings resulted in her bloody end.

Her arrest, 13 days before, had sent shockwaves across the kingdom and abroad. She had been queen for a little under three years, during which time she had become increasingly unpopular with the people of England and made dangerous enemies at court: none more so than her husband.

And yet, it had all started out with such promise. Anne had been Henry VIII's great obsession for seven long years. Driven mad by frustrated love – and lust – he had been unable to think of anything but setting aside his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, so he could marry Anne, who had cleverly refused to become a mere mistress. What had sharpened his appetite for her was the fact that she held out the promise of the thing he most desired in the world: a male heir. After more than 20 years of marriage, Catherine had only given him one surviving child, the princess Mary. The Tudors were still a fledgling dynasty, so Henry had been desperate to secure his throne with a son.

By the time Henry married Anne in secret in January 1533, she was already pregnant. The annulment of his first marriage had been rushed through, and Anne had arrived in triumph at the Tower at the end of May for her coronation. Henry had ordered a lavish refurbishment of the royal apartments to accommodate her – the same apartments in which she was later a prisoner. The September after her coronation, she gave birth to their first child: not the coveted male heir, but a daughter, the future Elizabeth I.

A series of miscarriages followed, the last being in January 1536, when it was said that the foetus had been well enough developed to tell that it was a boy. Already tired of Anne's fiery nature and 'unqueenly' behaviour, Henry convinced himself that this marriage, too, was displeasing to God. With the help of his trusted adviser, Thomas Cromwell, he brought a case against Anne that was inspired by her flirtatious manner and coterie of male admirers. She was accused of adultery with five men – including her own brother, George – and of conspiring about the king's death with one of her lovers. The entire case was based upon little more than rumour and gossip, but it was enough to have the queen arrested at Greenwich on 2 May and brought to the Tower to await her trial.

The odds were so heavily stacked against Anne that there could only be one outcome: she was condemned to death

Unhappily married
Henry VIII – as depicted in this c1537 painting – grew tired of Anne's fiery character and 'unqueenly' ways and became convinced their union displeased God

A family affair

As Anne walked into the Great Hall on 15 May, she would have recognised a host of familiar faces. The roll call of attendees at her trial reads like a who's who of Tudor England. Presiding over the inquiry was Anne's uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, and there is evidence to suggest that her father, Thomas Boleyn, sat on the jury. When it came to survival in Henry's court, blood was not thicker than water.

Detailed records of the trial survive in the National Archives, nestled in their original leather pouch labelled "Baga de Secretis" (Bag of Secrets) – the official records of many important state trials. They make for salacious reading. Anne was depicted as a wanton woman who could not control her "frail and carnal lusts" and who allegedly enticed the men of Henry's court with "kisses and touchings… to be her adulterers and concubines". She reportedly encouraged her brother's advances, "alluring him with her tongue in the said George's mouth". With Henry Norris, she had apparently joked that if the king died, he would seek to fill "dead men's shoes". To speak of the king's death, even in jest, was treason.

Although Anne was almost certainly innocent of all the charges against her – for the vast majority of the instances when Anne had apparently been unfaithful, she wasn't even in the same place as her alleged lovers – she managed to retain her composure throughout the proceedings. When she was finally permitted to speak, she gave an eloquent and well-reasoned defence. But the odds were so heavily stacked against her that there could only be one outcome. She was found guilty of treason and condemned to be burned or beheaded at "the king's pleasure". Upon the delivery of the verdict, a cannon was fired from the Tower, giving the signal to Henry, who was at nearby Whitehall Palace, that his wife has been condemned.

Henry seemed entirely unconcerned by the news. In fact, the court had never been so lively, with feasting and revels continuing late into the night. The imperial ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, reported that the king had "daily gone out to dine here and there with ladies, and sometimes has remained with them till after midnight". He likened it to "the joy and pleasure a man feels in getting rid of a thin old vicious hack in the hope of getting soon a fine horse to ride".

Behind the scenes, though, Henry was making detailed plans for his estranged wife's execution. Although the trial papers have been trawled over at length, another, lesser-known but altogether more chilling document relating to Anne's fate is worthy of consideration: a warrant issued by the king to Sir William Kingston, constable of the Tower, concerning the manner in which the queen was to be dispatched. He stipulated that although Anne had been "adjudged to death… by burning of fire… or decapitation", his pity led him to spare her the more painful death by burning, instead commanding "that immediately after the receipt of these presents, upon the Green within our Tower of London, the head of the same Anne shall be cut off". Henry added that Kingston should "omit nothing" in carrying out his orders.

Although it is horrific that a man should order his wife's execution with such apparent coldness, the fact that Henry spared Anne the more agonising death by fire was a real kindness, by the standards of the day. The Treason Act stipulated that a guilty man

MORE FROM US

Tracy Borman discusses the Tudors as part of our 'Everything you wanted to know' **podcast** series. It's available at *historyextra.com/podcast*

AKG-IMAGES

A caged queen

This 1835 painting shows Anne Boleyn mourning her fate in the Tower of London after her arrest on 2 May 1536. She was later found guilty of adultery, incest and treason

GETTY IMAGES

Obtaining an expert executioner was the final piece in a jigsaw that Henry had been carefully laying ever since Anne's arrest

should be hanged, drawn and quartered, while a woman should be burned. Although this was often commuted to beheading, that was not much better; if the axe was blunt, it could take several blows to sever the head. But Henry had specified that Anne's head should be "cut off", which meant by sword – it would take the head off with one clean strike. This method of execution was common in France, but not in England.

The king had already sent for an expert swordsman from Calais before his wife's trial even took place. The warrant, which was dated 18 May 1536, was the final piece in a jigsaw that he had been carefully laying ever since Anne's arrest.

Killing with kindness

Henry had even gone to the trouble of ordering a new set of clothes for the swordsman. Contrary to the popular image of executioners dressed all in black with hoods covering their faces, they in fact wore garish clothes more akin to jesters so that they could be easily picked out (and avoided) by members of their local community, who feared and reviled them. Henry therefore ordered a sombre outfit for the Calais swordsman so that Anne would not be able to distinguish him from the other men gathered on the scaffold. It was another 'kindness', intended to spare her undue alarm.

The same was true – in part – of the stipulation that Anne should be put to death inside the walls of the Tower, rather than up on Tower Hill, the site of hundreds of public executions over the centuries. Although this spared her the baying crowds that gathered to witness each execution, this was at least as much for Henry's benefit as hers. He did not want to risk the fallen queen attracting any support from the people. The green inside the Tower is now synonymous with executions, but Anne's was the first officially sanctioned, pre-arranged one to be ordered there.

The king's attention to detail was justified, if calculating. This was the first time an anointed queen had been put to death, so it was important to get it right. The Tudors were obsessed with protocol and ceremony, and the queen's execution was setting a precedent for any future such occasions. Anne's successors should have taken note: Henry knew exactly what to do next time.

The effort that the king put into preparing for his wife's execution also implies that he harboured no doubts whatsoever that it must be done. And yet, the evidence suggests that those closest to him – and Anne herself – did not believe he would really go through with it. The archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who knew the queen well, was utterly distraught when he heard that she had been arrested. He told Henry: "I had never [a] better opinion of [a] woman," and he firmly believed she was innocent of any wrongdoing. The same was true of a growing number of Henry's subjects. During Anne's trial, which was packed with hostile courtiers, the mood had shifted in her favour thanks to the dignity and conviction with which she had refuted all the charges against her.

By 18 May, when the king had ordered her execution to proceed, there were so many supporters of Anne within the Tower that it had to be postponed for fear of unrest. Cromwell duly cleared the fortress of all those whom he suspected were sympathetic towards the fallen queen, as well as foreign diplomats who would describe the execution in their dispatches. The delay was torture for poor Anne. "I shall not die afore noon, and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought to be dead by this time and past my pain," she lamented to Sir William Kingston. Her torment was heightened by the knowledge that the five men accused with her had been executed the day before on Tower Hill. From her apartments, she would have heard the

A quick death Anne was executed by sword, as depicted in this etching from the c17th century. Henry delivered Anne a great 'kindness' by sentencing her to death in this manner, as it was much quicker than execution by fire or the axe

New love Henry VIII was betrothed to one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting, Jane Seymour – shown above in a 1536 painting – the day after Anne's execution

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

Final moments This 1833 painting shows the fate of Lady Jane Grey, the 'nine days' queen', who was beheaded in 1554. Anne's execution had profound implications for future monarchs, Tracy Borman argues

roar of the crowd each time the axe fell.

Kingston likely witnessed this brutal demonstration of the king's justice first-hand – the men had been his prisoners, after all. But it seems that he, more than any of the other officials involved, could not countenance the king taking such a shocking and unprecedented step and was sure that Henry would grant Anne a last-minute reprieve. Indeed, despite the king's very clear instructions, when the day of her execution – 19 May – dawned, he seemed wholly unprepared.

A catalogue of blunders

What unfolded on 19 May was a catalogue of blunders. Although Henry had stipulated that his estranged wife was to be beheaded on Tower Green, the hastily built scaffold had been erected on the north side of the White Tower, opposite what is today the Waterloo Block, home of the crown jewels. Staggeringly, the gates of the Tower had been accidentally left open, and a thousand people had surged in to witness Anne's execution – only a few of whom were supposed to be there.

At around 8.30am, Anne was escorted to the scaffold by Kingston. Eyewitnesses noted that she kept looking around her, as if hoping to see a messenger from the king carrying a royal pardon. The crowds fell silent as she mounted the scaffold and delivered her final speech. As the church bells struck nine, Anne sank to her knees and began to pray. There was no block; she was to be beheaded while kneeling. A blindfold was placed over her eyes, and she was heard to utter: "God, have pity on my soul!" After a few breaths, the executioner silently stepped forward and swung the sword above his head to gain momentum, then sliced it swiftly and cleanly through Anne's neck. The Tower cannons fired out, giving the signal that the Queen of England was dead. Upon hearing it, the king boarded his royal barge and travelled the short distance upriver to Chelsea, where Jane Seymour, one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting, was waiting for him. The very next day, the king was betrothed to her.

For Anne, there was one final indignity. In his general unpreparedness, Kingston had not thought to order a coffin. An arrow chest was therefore hastily brought from the nearby Tower armoury, and the former queen's remains were placed in there. Three hours later, she was finally laid to rest in the Tower Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula – likely still in that same arrow chest.

Anne's execution might have been arranged as a matter of expediency by a king desperate for a male heir, but it had profound implications for the future of the English monarchy. Never again would an anointed queen – consort or regnant – rest easy on her throne. Catherine Howard, Henry's fifth wife, was also put to death at the king's command (see right). Long after Henry's reign had ended, in February 1554, Lady Jane Grey, the 'nine days' queen', was beheaded in the Tower. Thirty-three years later, Anne's daughter, Elizabeth, ordered the execution of her rival, Mary, Queen of Scots. And it was thanks to her mother's fate that Elizabeth feared history might repeat itself for her, too. H

Tracy Borman is an author, historian and broadcaster, specialising in the Tudor period. Her forthcoming series, *The Fall of Anne Boleyn*, is expected to air soon on Channel 5

LISTEN You can listen to a BBC World Service Witness History episode about **the execution of Anne Boleyn at** *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03v870n*

BBC WORLD NEWS

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

SAME PUNISHMENT, DIFFERENT CRIMES?

Less than six years later, Henry executed Catherine Howard. How closely did her fate match Anne Boleyn's?

In theory, Anne Boleyn's execution had created a precedent for the lawful killing of an anointed queen. The various protocols were tested again less than six years later when, in February 1542, Henry's fifth wife, Catherine Howard, was sent to her death. Like Anne, her crime was adultery. But unlike Anne, her guilt was beyond question.

Henry ordered that Catherine's execution should take place on Tower Green. As before, it was scheduled for early in the morning. Just like Anne's, the event was postponed – not to clear the Tower of would-be supporters, but to give the near-hysterical Catherine the chance to compose herself.

This is where the similarities ended. There was no Calais swordsman this time; Catherine was instead dispatched with an axe. Neither is there any record of sober and discreet clothing being ordered for the executioner. And, whereas Anne had been told of the arrangements made for her execution, Catherine was kept in the dark. Eustace Chapuys reported how on the eve of her execution, the queen "asked to have the block brought in to her, that she might know how to place herself".

On the day scheduled for the execution, the gates of the Tower had evidently been secured, as there was just a small gathering to witness Catherine's death. After the axe had fallen, her body was draped in a black cloak and taken for burial in the same chapel as Anne had been laid to rest. This had nothing to do with protocol – St Peter ad Vincula was the resting place for other victims of Henry VIII's regime, including the erstwhile favourite Thomas Cromwell.

If Catherine's execution did not follow the model that had been created for Anne, then why had the king gone to so much trouble in the first place? The unavoidable conclusion is that the various concessions he made for Anne were in part to ease his conscience. Although he gave a convincing show of believing his second wife to be a traitor and adulteress, it is likely that deep down he knew her to be innocent. Anne's only crime had been her failure to give Henry the son he so desired.

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

Save when you subscribe
to the digital edition

BBC
BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR PARANOIA
WHY ARMAGEDDON STALKED THE 1980s
HISTORY MAGAZINE
BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE
£5.50 / October 2020 / www.historyextra.com
ANNE BOLEYN'S FINAL BATTLE
The dramatic last moments of a queen's life
Mayflower myth
Did the Pilgrim Fathers create a tolerant new world?
A SIKH TRAGEDY
The Indian kingdom that fell foul of the British empire
holy warlord
Edward the Confessor used and force to protect his realm
The Princes in the Tower
History's greatest mystery
SURVIVAL SECRE
MEDIEVAL DY
The surprising ways in which monarchs kept their bloodline on the throne
BLACK HISTORY IN THE NEWS
How police violence has shaped the civil rights story
Michael Wood on the legacy of slavery
The black abolitionists who shocked Victorian Britain
HISTORY
History's Greatest MYSTERIES

Available from

GET IT ON Google play

zinio™

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC History Magazine is Britain's bestselling history magazine. We feature leading historians writing lively and thought-provoking new takes on the great events of the past.

A SIKH TRAGEDY
The fall of the mighty Sikh empire in the 1840s has long been attributed to the death of its brilliant leader, Ranjit Singh, a few years earlier. But the truth is far messier. Priya Atwal reveals how miscalculation, misogyny and British ruthlessness sealed the fate of the Indian powerhouse
Empire builder
Maharajah Ranjit Singh sits astride a horse as an attendant holds a parasol over him. Singh is historically credited with growing his ancestral warrior-clan, the Sukerchakia mist, into a grand imperial dynasty
28
GETTY IMAGES
Colonial mythologies
BBC
HISTORY
BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR PARANOIA
ANNE BOLEYN'S FINAL BATTLE
The dramatic last moments of a queen's life
A SIKH TRAGEDY

Enjoy our Premium App experience now available from

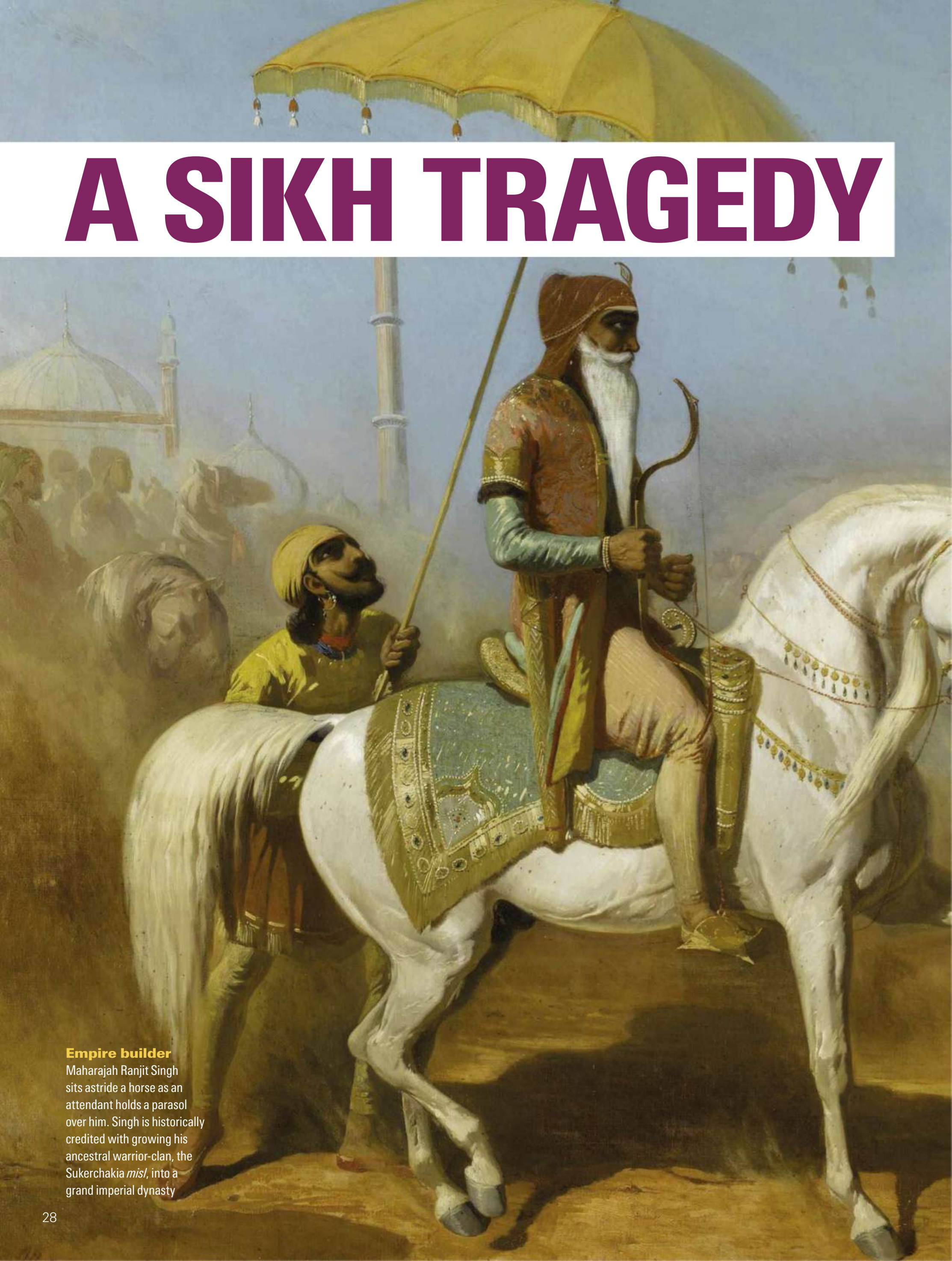
GET IT ON Google play

zinio™

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

A SIKH TRAGEDY



Empire builder
Maharajah Ranjit Singh sits astride a horse as an attendant holds a parasol over him. Singh is historically credited with growing his ancestral warrior-clan, the Sukerchakia *misl*, into a grand imperial dynasty

GETTY IMAGES

The fall of the mighty Sikh empire in the 1840s has long been attributed to the death of its brilliant leader, Ranjit Singh, a few years earlier. But the truth is far messier. **Priya Atwal** reveals how miscalculation, misogyny and British ruthlessness sealed the fate of the Indian powerhouse

Despite the summer heat enveloping the walled city of Lahore in late June 1839, a chilling sense of anxiety and grief pervaded the hearts of Punjabi ministers and courtiers gathered inside the royal chambers of the imperial palace. Their master, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, lay senseless and on the verge of death in his opulent bedchamber, inside the Lahore Fort. Countless prayers were being offered for his recovery, and vast sums of alms – gold, jewels and elephants, no less – were given away from the fabulous riches of the Sikh imperial treasury, in the desperate hope of saving Ranjit Singh's life, or at least procuring God's mercy for his soul.

The palatial apartments occupied by the ailing maharajah were originally constructed centuries before by the great Mughal emperors, but they had been restored to a different kind of glory by Ranjit Singh, who, as a 19-year-old, had conquered Lahore in 1799.

Famed as the 'Lion of Punjab', Ranjit Singh was a self-made king who established the rule of his ancestral warrior-clan, the Sukerchakia *misl*, at the head of a new empire in northern India. With Mughal rule entirely decimated, the Sikh king's might came to equal that of his greatest ally and rival, the East India Company – the enormously powerful trading organisation that, by the early 19th century, was acting as an agent of British imperialism in India.

These two new powers established competing empires during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but in Ranjit Singh's lifetime an alliance was cemented between them that kept the ambitions of both sides in balance.

Within six years of his death, however, the picture was utterly transformed. Ranjit Singh's erstwhile allies, the British, were at war with his heirs. Four years after that, in March 1849, the East India Company subjected his entire kingdom to its rule, effectively cementing British imperial predominance in south Asia. Despite all this, the Company's leading authorities claimed that they had consistently shown unstinting loyalty to the friendship and memory of the late, great maharajah. How could this be fairly squared?

Colonial mythologies

The answer to this messy political history lies in the mythology spun around Ranjit Singh's life – most prominently by the Company's political officers working in and around the Punjab. Across a growing array of press coverage, fictional writings and government proclamations, a compelling narrative was offered about Ranjit Singh's personality and glowing career as an empire builder. The maharajah was viewed – according to European colonial logic – as an admirable exception among the "oriental despots" of his day. "For his age and country, he may truly be called a great, and in some respects, a good king," wrote Henry Lawrence (who became Resident at Lahore in 1846) in his 1845 novel, *Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Runjeet Singh*. "Kind and liberal to those within his sight, he is much beloved by his personal followers."

On the other hand, Lawrence's novel

portrayed the maharajah's eldest sons variously as an "imbecile" and a "dissolute vagabond", and generally, as being "far from clever". These negative characterisations fed into the British story that these sons were 'inferior' successors, signally incapable of ruling the kingdom that Ranjit had so brilliantly crafted. The only option, therefore, was to step in and do it on their behalf.

The acts of aggression that followed extinguished the power of one of 19th-century India's few remaining independent kingdoms and effectively cemented the Company's imperial predominance in south Asia. And this aggression was fundamentally based on a misrepresentation of the truth. For all his impressive qualities, Ranjit Singh was not the sole architect of Sikh power, and his successors weren't worthy of nothing but disdain. Only by acknowledging this can we begin to fully understand the forces, ideas and people who contributed to the rise and fall of the once mighty Sikh empire.

Glory and gold

There is no doubt that Ranjit Singh was a talented man and a much-loved ruler. The Sukerchakia *misl* was among the smallest of the 12 Sikh warrior-bands that fought off Mughal supremacy and Afghan invasions to dominate the Punjabi landscape by the end of the 18th century. After the untimely death of his father, Ranjit Singh became chief of the Sukerchakias at the tender age of 10; by his mid-twenties, he would be well on his way to outstripping the power of the other *misls*.

WITH RANJIT SINGH'S DEATH, THE BRITISH BEGAN HAWKISHLY RAMPING UP THEIR ANTIPATHY TOWARDS HIS HEIRS

During his 40-year reign, Ranjit Singh successfully made vassals of almost all the other Sikh chieftains and subsumed their territories into his burgeoning empire. His kingdom grew rapidly beyond the Punjab to encompass the hill fortresses of Kangra, the valley of Kashmir, and the mountain passes bordering Afghanistan.

Such conquests were completed by a formidable army, with cutting-edge infantry and artillery regiments – the creation of which was one of Ranjit Singh's greatest achievements. The maharajah studied closely the mercenary forces of European colonial powers in India and hired talented soldiers from around the globe to modernise his army, some of whom had formerly been employed by Napoleon Bonaparte.

These troops were deeply loyal to Ranjit Singh and formed the bedrock of the imperial state that he constructed, emanating from his capital in Lahore. The new Sikh royal court built within the city's Mughal palaces deliberately echoed the rule of the third Mughal emperor Akbar 'the Great', with its cosmopolitan and tolerant culture, and plethora of talented Sikh, Hindu and Muslim ministers working closely with Ranjit Singh and his family.

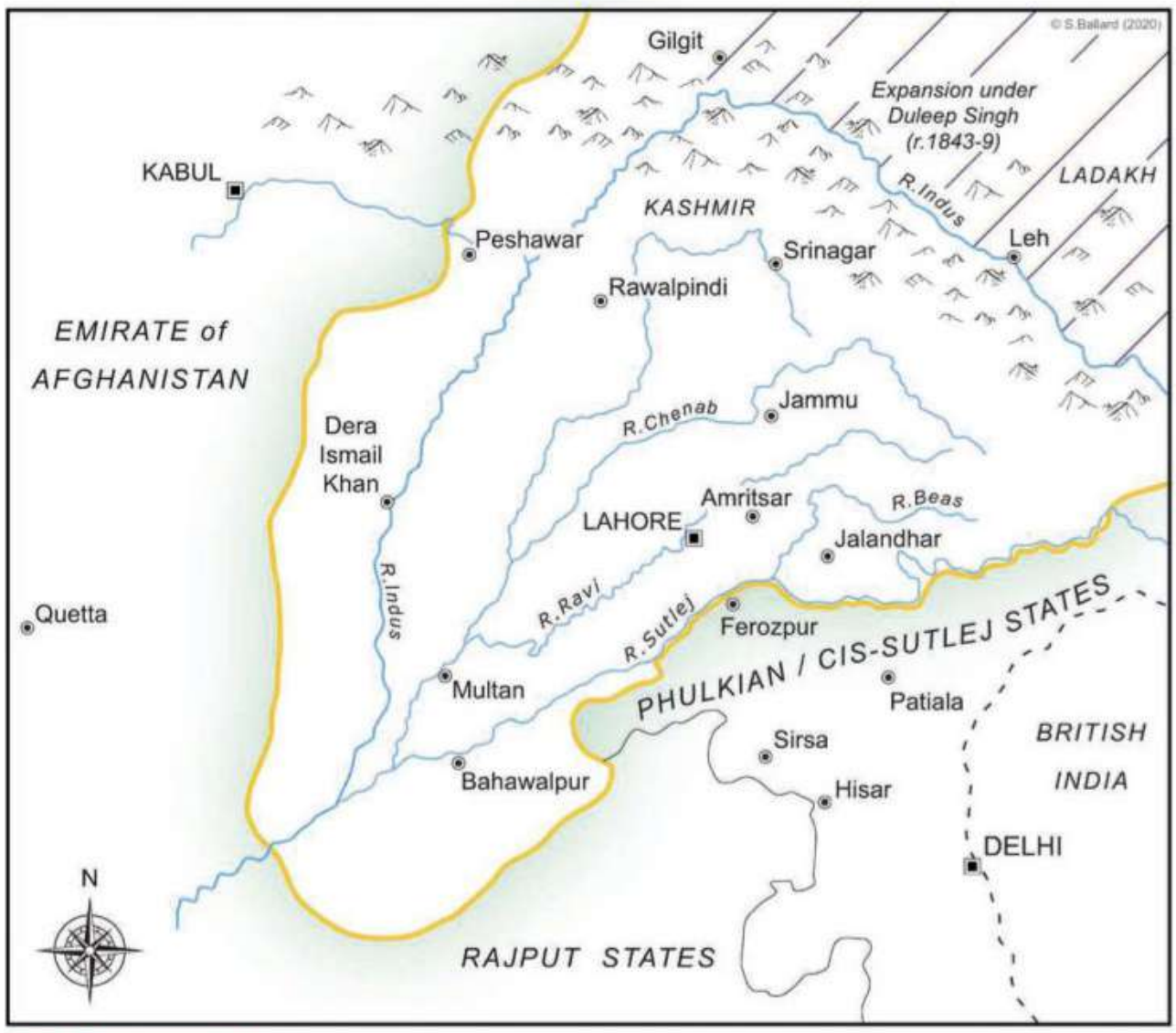
Yet the Sikh court was also much less of a hierarchical and formal environment than the Mughals had formerly imposed. Ranjit Singh – though clearly not someone to challenge – was a relatively humble and humane ruler. He refused to mint coins in his own name or image, accepted punishment from Sikh religious authorities when they felt he had overstepped his bounds, and gave generously to his people, actively promoting education for all and banning the killing of criminals or conquered enemies.

It is for good reason, then, that Ranjit Singh's era is remembered as a golden age – quite literally so. Such was the amount of wealth generated during the maharajah's reign that he had the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar (the pre-eminent Sikh shrine) covered in gold-plated sheets, so giving the place of worship a name by which it is known the world over: 'the Golden Temple'.

Yet for all his wealth and power, the maharajah was no superman. By focusing on him alone, we overlook the wider dynamics that contributed to his rise. As the eminent Sikh historian JS Grewal reminds us, "The obvious fact that Ranjit Singh was a ruler of the third generation in the Sukerchakia family has not been properly appreciated."

It certainly helped Ranjit Singh that his parents and grandparents had been successful warriors and leaders within the Sikh community. They carved out a lucrative territorial niche in north-western Punjab, perfectly suited to founding a kingdom. Raj Kaur, his mother, administered this estate for him until he came of age. When the teenaged Ranjit then began engaging in battle and moved to conquer Lahore, he was supported by Sada Kaur, his mother-in-law, mentor and a formidable military ally. Indeed, Ranjit Singh would likely have lost the city had Sada Kaur not been there to tactfully make peace with its defeated Sikh occupants.

His uncle, Rajah Bhag Singh of Jind, brokered Ranjit Singh's first contact with the East India Company: fatefully ensuring that



Rapid expansion Our map shows the Sikh empire at its height under Ranjit Singh. The maharajah's armies conquered swathes of territory including the valley of Kashmir, and the mountain passes bordering Afghanistan

MAP: SEBASTIAN BALLARD

Bathed in gold
Ranjit Singh had the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, the pre-eminent Sikh shrine, covered in gold-plated sheets. As a result, it is now known the world over as the 'Golden Temple'

GETTY IMAGES

FROM CONQUEST TO CALAMITY

Five protagonists in the rise and fall of the Sikh empire

1. The legend of south Asia

Born in Gujranwala (now in Pakistan), Maharajah Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) was the scion of a Sikh warrior-clan, who became a legendary figure in south Asian history. His youth was spent in battles and empire-building, leaving him effectively illiterate. Yet the maharajah was a lover of the arts and history: collecting rare manuscripts, restoring Mughal architecture, and inviting the most talented musicians, artists and dancing girls to amaze his guests and enliven his glittering royal court in Lahore.

2. The underrated son

Maharajah Kharak Singh (1800–40) was the first-born son of Ranjit Singh and his second wife, Mai Nakain, and was anointed heir apparent in 1816. British colonial accounts portrayed him as an "imbecile"; in 19th-century English, this word was understood to mean a person with a cognitive disability. Alexander Burnes' account mocked Kharak Singh over his apparent difficulties with speech. Yet he also documented the prince's management of a key fortress on the Punjabi-Afghan border. Contemporary Punjabi sources, meanwhile, provide plenty of evidence about his largely overlooked but considerable success as a military commander.

A c1840 painting of Ranjit Singh's son Maharajah Kharak Singh, whom the British portrayed as a weak and unfit ruler – perhaps unjustly

BRIDGEMAN/AKG-IMAGES

Ranjit Singh – fourth from left in this 1841 painting – is famous for forging the Sikh empire

The treatment of Maharani Jind Kaur – who is depicted in this c1840 painting – was indicative of misogynistic attitudes of the period

3. The thorn in Britain's side

Maharani Jind Kaur (1817–63) was Ranjit Singh's last wife, and the mother of his youngest child, Duleep Singh. Civil war brought Jind Kaur to power as regent of her son's government, from September 1843. Ousted from power and the Punjab by 1849, the maharani made an incredible escape from British captivity, trekking hundreds of miles to seek sanctuary in Kathmandu. There, she plotted to free the Punjab. She failed in that endeavour, but was reunited with Duleep after 13 years of painful separation, in 1861.

4. The troublesome mother-in-law

Sada Kaur (c1762–1832) was a Sikh noblewoman who ran the Kanhaiya *misl* after her husband was killed by Ranjit Singh's father, Maha Singh. Incredibly, she made peace with the Sukerchakias after Maha Singh's own untimely death and agreed to marry her daughter to Ranjit Singh. Sada Kaur supported her son-in-law's rise, but knowing that she hoped to create a Kanhaiya kingdom, Ranjit Singh later drastically curbed her power. After she attempted to rally British support for her cause, Sada Kaur was kept under house arrest until her death.

5. The wolf in sheep's clothing

Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence (1806–57) was a British military officer and administrator. Fascinated by Indian royalty and dreaming of becoming a "second Runjeet Singh", he wrote his way to high office in the Punjab, publishing multiple articles and a novel about its recent past. As British Resident at Lahore, he sought to 'reform' the Punjabi royals and make them useful allies for the East India Company. His interventionist policies weakened the Sikh government and fomented unrest, leading to war and annexation in 1849.

A c1828 painting of Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, whose policies contributed to the empire's fall

BRIDGEMAN

QUEEN VICTORIA WROTE THAT "WE DEPEND UPON RUNJEET SINGH, WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR FRIEND"

as a newly anointed maharajah, Ranjit would not align himself with the rival Maratha empire or the French, but instead sign a friendship pact with the British in 1809.

This older generation of Sikh warrior-chiefs and kings were pioneers, constructing a new balance of power by overthrowing Mughal and Afghan control during the 18th century. Their endeavours mirrored those of a host of nawabs, rajahs and begums who similarly seized power throughout India in that period – themselves in competition with the merchant-imperialists of European trading companies who were also making waves in the region.

Far from being an 'exception' then, Ranjit Singh effectively rose to power by standing on the shoulders of this earlier generation. However, on becoming maharajah in 1801, his burning ambition meant he wasn't willing to share the limelight with his older relatives. Instead, he sidelined them by building himself an alternative network of familial allies through his marriages to a variety of women from across the classes, communities and regions of his growing kingdom. As they say, behind every great man, stands a great woman – and in Ranjit Singh's case, we're talking about at least 30 wives.

In 1837, when at the peak of his power, he hosted a constellation of Indian royals and leading Company men on a "most auspicious and fortunate day" to lavishly celebrate his grandson Nau Nihal Singh's wedding. Reflecting on the scene, Ranjit Singh remarked to his second wife, Mai Nakain, that he "must thank the Almighty, for such a day was not vouchsafed even to my forefathers".

Securing a place for his dynasty among the upper echelons of global royalty was the self-made maharajah's ultimate goal. It would no doubt have delighted him to know how, on the eve of the Company and the Sikhs jointly going to war in Afghanistan in 1838 (in an attempt to re-instate the toppled monarch, Shah Shuja, as the region's ruler), the young Queen Victoria confided in her journal that

"we depend upon Runjeet Singh, who has always been our friend".

Ranjit Singh certainly did all he could to put his family and court on prominent display. Occasions such as military reviews, princely weddings and courtly soirees were staged with spectacular grandeur to show off the greatness of Punjabi royal rulership. His queens, and a growing number of princely sons, were deployed as diplomats, military commanders and cultural patrons, to legitimise and expand the kingdom of the Sukerchakias as they transitioned from a minor *misl* to a grand imperial dynasty.

An "imbecile" heir?

The maharajah's first-born son and heir-apparent, Kharak Singh, was a lead figure in such endeavours. From the age of six, the prince was sent to capture key fortresses and lead ambassadorial missions – all with a view to schooling him in the arts of war, diplomacy and administration. Despite the hard work of his childhood years, however, Kharak Singh has a dismal reputation.

It was the famous Company officer, Alexander Burnes, who first ridiculed him in writing by describing him as an "imbecile", later followed by Henry Lawrence, who actually never met the prince. But not all Company men agreed with this assessment. Claude Martin Wade worked with the Lahore court for over 16 years and described Kharak Singh as a man with a "mild and humane disposition", who was "loved by his dependants". Wade went on to suggest that the prince appeared weak because – in an attempt not to provoke his father's jealousy – he had chosen to maintain a low profile.

Such supportive views were, however, rarely publicised within the English press or British policy documents. With Ranjit Singh's death, they had spotted the potential for an expansion of British power and began hawkishly ramping up antipathy towards the dead maharajah's heirs. And the fact that Kharak Singh's power as maharajah was rather easily usurped by his adult son, Nau Nihal Singh, and prime minister, Rajah Dhyan Singh, appeared to support more derogatory representations of his character.

In any case, by mid-November 1840, both Kharak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh were dead, the former after being allegedly poisoned by white lead and mercury; the latter after being struck by a falling block of stone. Whether the men's deaths occurred by accident or design remains a matter of controversy. But what is certain is that they inflicted two further shocks to a kingdom already struggling to regain its equilibrium.

The royal family managed to hold onto power, but its ability to govern effectively was fundamentally weakened by the turmoil that was unleashed after the winter of 1840. In the face of growing disorder, Ranjit Singh's last wife, Maharani Jind Kaur – following in the footsteps of Raj Kaur and Sada Kaur – attempted to re-impose royal control when her infant son, Duleep Singh, was made maharajah in September 1843. "So long as the maharajah is sovereign of his own kingdom," she declared, "it is the same as if I was sovereign myself." But her power was thwarted by rebellious troops, disloyal ministers, and eventually, Henry Lawrence – none of whom liked having a woman in charge.

Lawrence perceived the Sikh queen as a "dangerous and bitter enemy" and "the main source of all difficulty" for his plans to establish control over the Lahore government. While claiming to be driven by a "sincere wish to maintain the dignity and honour of the family of the late Maharajah Runjeet Sing", he separated Jind Kaur from her son and ousted her from the Punjab by 1848. When an anti-British rebellion then broke out, the entire kingdom was annexed a year later. Crucially, the East India Company justified its seizure of power by arguing that it was the Sikh queen, not the Company, who had been treacherous to the memory of her husband and his friendship with the British.

So, given the precipitous fall of his kingdom, was Ranjit Singh misguided in aligning himself so decisively with the East India Company? There was no way the maharajah could have predicted that his plans would go so awry – especially as the Anglo-Punjabi relationship had worked greatly in his favour during his lifetime. Yet it is clear that he over-estimated the respect in which his dynasty was held by East India Company officials and fatally misjudged the value they placed on his friendship.

What the Sikh empire's history reveals is the intense rivalry for power that characterised India's politics into the 19th century. Men, women and children could all stake claims to royal ascendancy, if they were ambitious and daring enough. But once the balance of power between the East India Company and the Sikh empire was disrupted, a new era of British dominance was ushered into being. India's royalty could no longer aspire to be conquerors; they were now the subjects of a foreign, distant queen. H

Fractured alliance Although the British and Sikh armies fought together in Afghanistan, they took up arms against each other after Ranjit Singh's death. This painting shows a scene from the second Anglo-Sikh war

ALAMY

ONE OF RANJIT SINGH'S GREATEST MISTAKES WAS TO MISJUDGE THE VALUE THE BRITISH PLACED ON THEIR FRIENDSHIP

Priya Atwal is a historian and author. Her new book, *Royals and Rebels: The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Empire*, will be published by Hurst in September. She presented the BBC Radio 4 series *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, which you can listen to online: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000dpjy*

LISTEN To listen to Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the **Sikh empire** on Radio 4's *In Our Time*, go to *bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b075t5mn*

The African who transformed Anglo-Saxon England

When a Libyan cleric called Hadrian arrived in Canterbury in AD 670, Anglo-Saxon England was a wild and semi-pagan land. Within a matter of years, it was the driving force behind a remarkable renaissance in learning. **Michael Wood** reveals how this little-known "man of Africa" helped lay the foundations of English culture

ALAMY

In recent years our eyes have been opened to black histories in Britain before the Windrush generation, stretching back through the world wars, on to the Victorian era and beyond. The numbers were small, but the presence was significant, as the black characters in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays show.

Much further back, there were Africans in Roman Britain, from Mauretania, today's Morocco and Algeria. Among them was Victor, the former slave of a cavalry soldier called Numerianus, who is described as "natione Maurum" ("of the Moorish nation") on a second-century AD tombstone from modern-day South Shields.

Then there's near silence. In the thousand years between the end of Roman Britain and the first British overseas explorations under the Tudors, people of colour are far less visible. Their stories cause barely a ripple in the waters of British history. One such story exists just below that surface – rarely impacting on public consciousness. But it is immeasurably important all the same.

Writing in 731, the English historian Bede introduces his readers to a "vir natione Afir", "a man of African race". Perhaps a Berber (or Amazigh), this man was a leading light in one of the most significant cultural movements of the past 1,400 years – a teacher of extraordinary influence on English history. This man was born in north Africa and spent the last 40 years of his life in England. He is buried here. But he had a good old Roman name: we know him as Abbot Hadrian the African.

Early church fathers

So how did a north African, born in the early seventh century, end up changing the course of English history? The story begins in the land of Hadrian's birth, Libya, where for many generations people of Greek descent had mixed with locals, and from where some of the early church fathers hailed. Bishop Quodvultdeus (died c450) was another north African man of the church to journey to Europe (albeit two centuries earlier). Quodvultdeus's haunting face may be preserved in a beautiful mosaic from the catacombs of San Gennaro in Naples (shown above right).

Hadrian was perhaps raised in the coastal town of Apollonia, which had at least four Byzantine churches in his day, and a great Roman palace whose dramatic seashore remains have been excavated by archaeologists. Years later, he reminisced with his students in England about the beautiful bird that he called 'porphyrion', the African purple gallinule, which roamed the courtyard gardens of a north African ruler's palace. Perhaps he had seen this place as a young man.

Hadrian was a leading light in one of the most significant cultural movements of British history

Apollonia had been rebuilt in the sixth century under the great Byzantine emperor Justinian, but the Arab invasions of the seventh century brought that world to an abrupt end. The nearby city of Benghazi fell to Arab armies in 642. Maybe the collapse of Byzantine rule forced Hadrian into flight. Whatever the reason, he soon made his way to southern Italy.

After crossing the Mediterranean, Hadrian became an abbot on Nisida, a picturesque island in the Bay of Naples (now joined to the shore by a causeway). Evidently he was a man of some standing and high reputation. He went on diplomatic trips to Gaul and may have acted as a Greek-speaking interpreter for Emperor Constans on his visit to Italy in 663. At any rate, by the late 660s Hadrian's reputation was such that Pope Vitalian asked him to take over the vacant archbishopric in Britain. It's an amazing idea when you think about it: a north African abbot and scholar being sent to "the outermost edge of the world", where as Pope Gregory had said, the tribes till recently "worshipped sticks and stones".

At first Hadrian refused to take the job, and he suggested Andrew, the abbot of a nunnery in Naples. But then he proposed a more senior man, a friend with whom his name would be forever linked: Theodore of Tarsus. Theodore was a Greek originally educated in Syria at Antioch and Edessa, from which he had fled during the Arab invasion of Syria. Now in Italy, he was living in semi-retirement with the Syrian exile community at Tre Fontane, a still idyllic cluster of churches south of Rome's walls.

Theodore agreed to go. He arrived on 27 May 669, serving as archbishop of Canterbury until his death in 690. Hadrian joined him the next year, and whatever his initial doubts, stayed for the rest of his life. Together the two men would go about putting into effect one of the most significant teaching programmes in British history.

England's happiest time

The nearly 70-year-old Syrian and 40-something Libyan made a formidable teaching partnership. And, soon, the school they established in Canterbury became famous Europe-wide. "They went everywhere and did everything together," says Bede, writing in 731. "It was the happiest time since the English first came to Britain."

As Bede's words suggest, in the course of their work, Hadrian and Theodore travelled all over England, "visiting every part of the land". One of their councils in 684 was held at Twyford beyond Hadrian's Wall (today a picturesque village by the East Coast mainline stop at Alnmouth). But they lived and worked in Canterbury – building a library, devising courses, giving lectures, and training the next generation of priests, administrators, artists and writers. One of these, Aldhelm, could proudly announce himself as "the first among the Germanic peoples to master the intricacies of Latin verse".

Bede says Hadrian spoke both Greek and Latin, and his exceptional language skills come out in surviving glossaries and teaching notes where we can see him riffing between those two languages and Old English. Bede also tells us that some of his pupils got to know Greek as well as their own language.

England was a wild and semi-pagan land, and in their baggage Hadrian and Theodore carried manuscripts and teaching aids to try to revive learning, which had stalled since St Augustine's

The page from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in which he describes the arrival in England of a "man of African race": Hadrian

BRIDGEMAN

This haunting mosaic from the catacombs of San Gennaro in Naples is believed to depict the north African cleric Bishop Quodvultdeus. Like Hadrian two centuries later, Quodvultdeus crossed the Mediterranean and spread the word of God in Europe

IMAGE ON PREVIOUS PAGE: The artwork surrounding our headline is taken from the seventh/eighth-century Lindisfarne Gospels, which bear the hallmarks of Hadrian's immense influence

The ruins of the Roman palace in the Libyan town of Apollonia, possibly Hadrian's birthplace. Hadrian may have fled to Europe as Arab armies swept through Byzantine north Africa

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

The Lindisfarne Gospels, one of the cultural jewels of early medieval Britain. Hadrian's influence on English culture can, perhaps, be detected in this manuscript's references to Neapolitan feasts and churches

conversion mission of 597. North Africa was a powerhouse of early Christianity, home to great authors like Tertullian and Cyprian. Hadrian may well have brought with him to England copies of many key African texts: manuscripts such as the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by the sixth-century north African writer Primasius, which survives today in Oxford's Bodleian Library. It's possible that Hadrian's baggage also contained the British Library's unique fragment of a collection of the letters of St Cyprian of Carthage, who was martyred in 258.

Bawdy riddles

Hadrian's influence on his adopted country may explain why the saints of Naples and Campania feature so strongly in Anglo-Saxon England. Even the Lindisfarne Gospels, one of our most famous manuscripts, contains Neapolitan feasts, like St Januarius and the anniversary of the dedication of the famous church of St Stephen in Naples in c500. Hadrian was surely responsible, too, for Anglo-Saxon knowledge of African saints, like the murdered Restituta, whose body, legend said, had miraculously floated across the sea from north Africa.

Hadrian also introduced his classes in Canterbury to the elegant Latin riddles of the the late Roman writer Symphosius, who was probably also African. Simple games of deductive reasoning, the riddles are terrific teaching aids. Hadrian's student Aldhelm was inspired to devise longer versions, and from that moment riddles really took off in English culture; Bede, Tatwine, Boniface and Alcuin tried their hand.

Later, a tradition of riddling in the vernacular developed, which became more risqué as time went on: an early testimony to the bawdy humour of the English. Some have wonderful vignettes of the natural world, others have the saucy observations of Donald McGill's seaside postcards. Through this mix of vigorous colloquialism, earthy views of sex and excruciating puns, you can trace a line all the way through English culture. And it all began with Hadrian.

Recent discoveries are adding to our knowledge of Hadrian and Theodore's teaching. Their Latin and Greek glossaries, translations and biblical commentaries are still being identified in later manuscripts. Others include medicine, metrology, philosophy, history, Roman civil law, poetry and the art of rhetoric. Parts of a major unknown commentary on Latin grammar were recently identified in Reims. A manuscript in Milan contains a copy of a student's lecture notes, taken while sitting in Theodore and Hadrian's classes in Canterbury, explaining the meaning of biblical texts, and the place-names, landscapes, customs, flora and fauna of the near east. "Melons?" says Theodore at one point, "They are like cucumbers, only bigger: in Edessa some come so big that you can hardly load two on one camel!"

In notes in Berlin and St Gallen in Switzerland, Hadrian is quoted explaining the Latin word *larum* (wrongly translated in an earlier teaching text) with the Old English word for seagull, *meaw* (a word still used in some northern dialects). So he could and did teach in the vernacular.

Copied and anthologised, carried abroad by missionaries and itinerant scholars, fragments of these teaching notes are found in later medieval libraries all over Europe. Through them we can hear the voices of perhaps the most influential teachers in the medieval western tradition.

In later times, Theodore and Hadrian were seen as the founders of the educational system of the west. A medieval writer traces the scholarly pedigree of Europe from them through the Carolingian Renaissance of the eighth and ninth centuries down to "modern times", transmitting the knowledge of the Latin and Greek worlds to the far west – and of course, on to us. In the 21st century we have seen the tragic refugee traffic across the sea from Libya to Italy, and from Syria through Turkey to Greece: the very routes Hadrian and Theodore took more than 1300 years ago. Their tale shows how refugees from Syria and Libya helped lay the foundations of the culture of Britain and Ireland.

As archbishop of Canterbury, it was Theodore who got most of the credit. But Hadrian, his brilliant, loyal, self-effacing partner, was every bit as influential – and was maybe even greater in scholarship. As the poet and teacher Alcuin put it in York a century later, our English culture's roots came from four great strands: the wisdom of Greece and Rome, the Hebrew tradition –"and the light that came out of Africa". H

Fragments of Hadrian's teaching notes have been found in later medieval libraries across Europe

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

GETTY IMAGES

BBC FROM THE MAKERS OF **BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE**

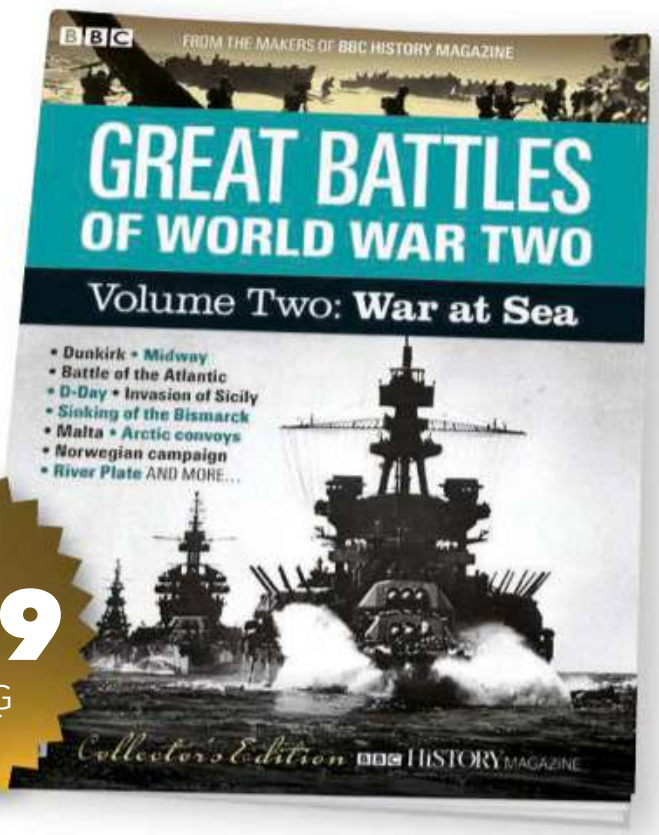
GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR TWO

Volume Two: **War at Sea**

This second volume of a new three-part series examines the explosive encounters that shaped the war on the waves. Discover:

- The inside story behind the Allied evacuation of Dunkirk
- Why the US triumphed at the battle of Midway
- How the Merchant Navy remained resilient in the Atlantic
- The top-secret 'war game' that destroyed German U-boats
- Why the battle of the Philippine Sea paved the way for Japan's downfall

PLUS – FREE UK postage on this special edition


BBC
FROM THE MAKERS OF BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE
GREAT BATTLES
OF WORLD WAR TWO
Volume Two: War at Sea
• Dunkirk • Midway
• Battle of the Atlantic
• D-Day • Invasion of Sicily
• Sinking of the Bismarck
• Malta • Arctic convoys
• Norwegian campaign
• River Plate AND MORE...
Collectors Edition BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

ONLY £9.99 INCLUDING FREE P&P*

Discover why the tiny island of Malta became the **most bombed place on earth**

Uncover the **daring British plot** to fool the Germans and seize Sicily

Find out how the Allies planned the **largest seaborne invasion** in history

Order online **www.buysubscriptions.com/WarAtSea**

or call us on **03330 162 138**+ and quote WW2 WAR AT SEA

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm.
*UK residents receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £9.99 for all UK residents, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for Rest of World. All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

GETTY IMAGES

Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

When did people start wearing glasses?

Various ancient peoples knew of the magnifying properties of lenses. There's fragmentary evidence that the ancient Egyptians may have used them, while the Roman emperor Nero improved his view of gladiatorial games by watching them through an emerald.

By AD 1000, the Persian scholar Ibn Sahl had written a famous treatise on optics. In it he described "reading stones" – made of quartz or rock crystal, or glass spheres cut in half – which could be placed over a text to magnify it.

Eyeglass technology had advanced further still by the early years of the Italian Renaissance. We know this because several writers, including Petrarch (1304–74), were describing people holding pairs of lenses over their eyes, or suspending them from the bridge of their noses. The theologian Jordan of Pisa claimed in 1306 to have met the inventor who came up with the idea fewer than 20 years previously.

It's possible, in fact, that glasses had a significant impact on the Renaissance. After all, thanks to these aids, medieval scholars' eyes could now endure many more years of reading and studying.

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist specialising in history

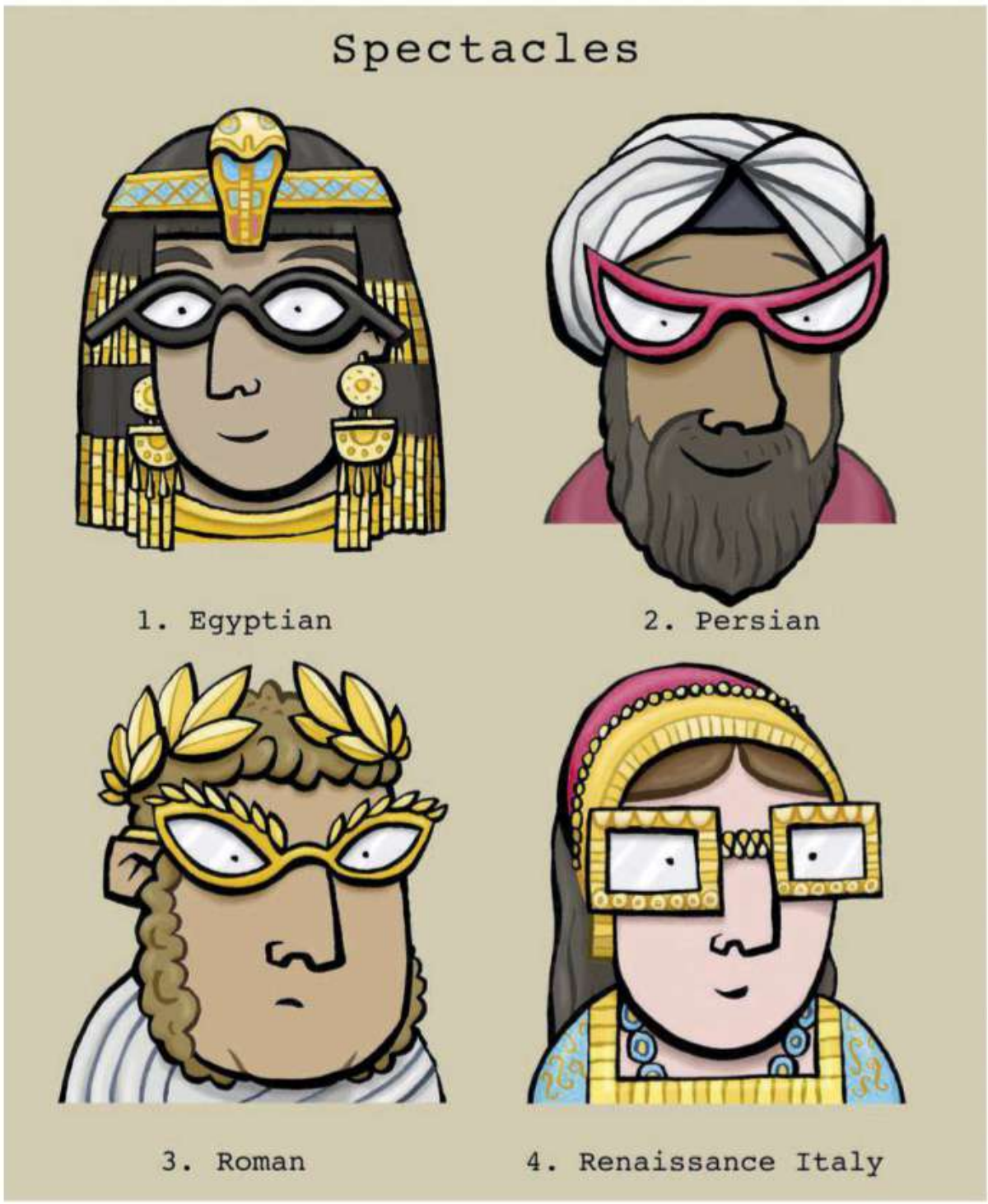


ILLUSTRATION BY **GLEN MCBETH**

Wedding rings removed from the victims of the Third Reich. Much of the gold looted by the Nazis has never been recovered

ALAMY

Is there really any lost Nazi gold?

The answer to this question is, almost certainly, yes. But the chances are that no one will ever find it.

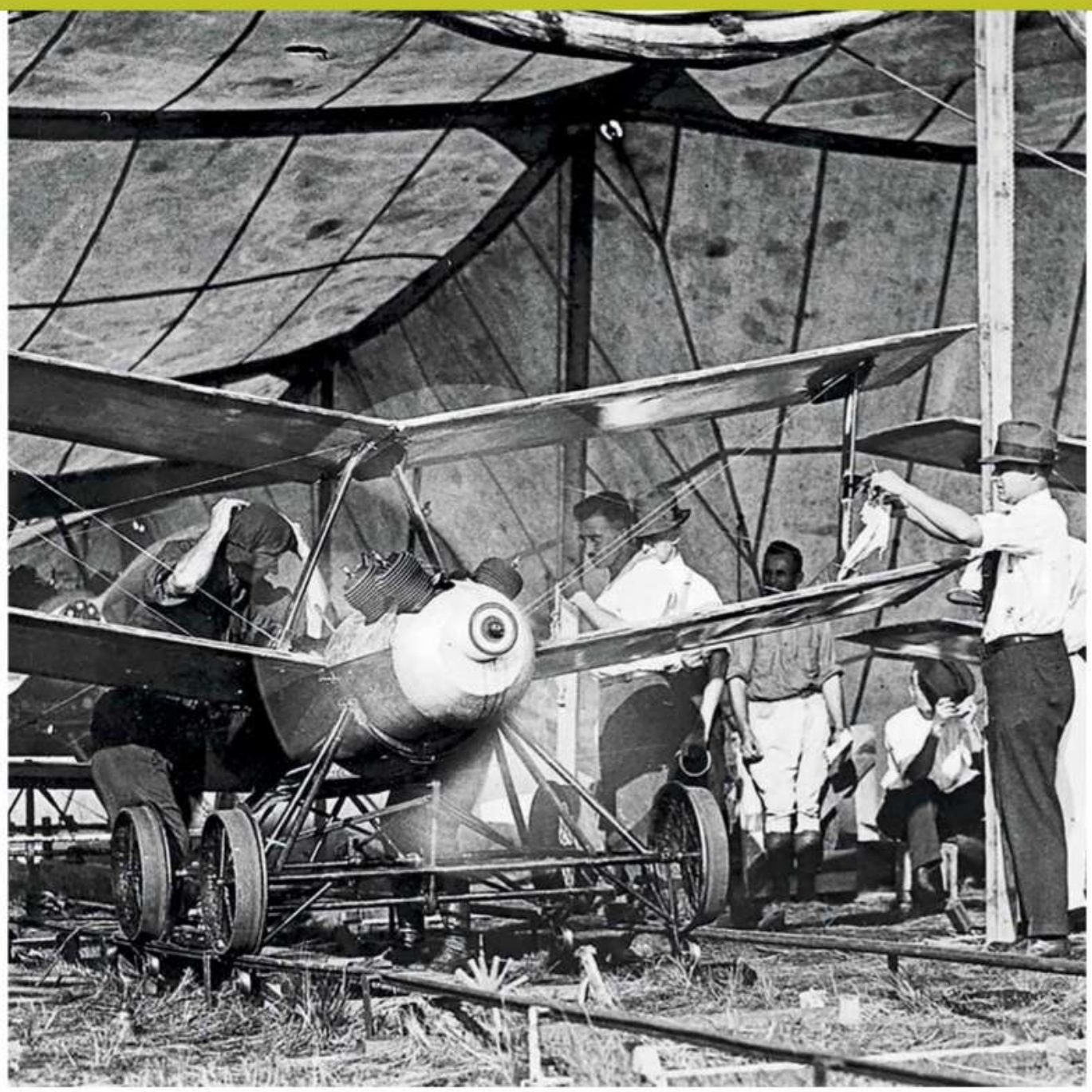
The Nazis were inveterate looters. Their hoarding of fine art from across Europe is well documented, but their looting of gold was arguably more extensive and more systematic. German territorial expansion went hand in hand with the forced "acquisition" of gold reserves, with those of Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, Yugoslavia and the USSR, among others, falling into their hands.

Add to that the large quantities of gold and gold coinage that were stolen from private deposits in occupied nations, as well as the gold recovered from the teeth of Holocaust victims, and one realises the scale of the problem. The total value of Germany's wartime gold holdings is unknown, but has been estimated at more than $900bn, with an unknown figure "off the books".

Yet, unlike fine art, gold can very easily be repurposed: melted down to hide its origins and sold via complicit or unwitting intermediaries. So it was that the vast majority of that 'Nazi Gold' was disposed of, with Switzerland being the most usual cashier. For the residue, there were a few spectacular finds, such as the 211 tonnes of gold discovered in a mine at Merkers in Thuringia in 1945. It is thought that just over 3 tonnes is still unaccounted for.

Unsurprisingly, the hunt for that remnant goes on, spurred by rumours swirling around Austrian lakes, Italian mines or buried Silesian trains. Only time will tell if it is ever found.

Roger Moorhouse, author of *First to Fight* (Bodley Head, 2019)



The world's first drone, known as the Kettering Bug, pictured during the First World War, when it was developed by the US military. Killing from a safe distance has long been the holy grail of weapons design, writes James Rogers

GETTY IMAGES/PICTURE CONSULTANT: EVERETT SHARP

What has been the most significant development in the history of weaponry?

Dealing deadly blows from a safe distance has long been the aim of fighters throughout history. From arrows made of jet-black obsidian and lethal stone-tipped spears, through to modern jet bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles, the ambition to kill from distance has disturbingly captivated humanity's ingenuity and unbounded creativity. Yet, there is one weapon that strikes at the heart of this human desire to distance oneself from the visceral heat of battle, from face-to face fighting, and from the very act of killing itself: the military drone.

Modern armed military drones, like the infamous Predator or Reaper, are remotely piloted aerial weapons that can strike an enemy target, while a team of operators sits thousands of miles away, safe from hostile fire. Surprisingly, however, the first drones were invented more than a century ago. The idea to create an 'unmanned aerial torpedo' emerged out of the bloody battlefields of the First World War.

The motivation, American in origin, was to create a machine that would allow the US military to avoid sending its youngest, best and brightest to die in muddy trenches. Instead, American airpower thinkers wanted to go 'over not through' the enemy by creating both manned and unmanned airborne systems that could deal death from above.

The first 'drone', known as the Kettering Bug, was tested towards the end of the 1914–18 war, but did not see active service. Nevertheless, over the next century, drones would rise up to become the modern spearhead of American warfare that we see today.

Dr James Rogers, historian, writer and broadcaster. He presents the *Untold History* series on Dan Snow's History Hit TV

DID YOU KNOW...?

Mission to Mexico

An Irish nobleman and antiquarian squandered much of his fortune on an attempt to show that the indigenous people of Mexico were descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. In the 1830s, Viscount Kingsborough published at his own expense a multi-volume book entitled *Antiquities of Mexico*, intended to prove his theory. The project ruined him. Unable to pay the printer's bill, he was sent to a debtors' prison in Dublin where he contracted typhus and died soon after his release.

Sex and vegetables

Sufferers from sexually transmitted diseases in 18th-century London were told they could cure themselves by drinking a vegetable syrup. According to Isaac Swainson, the quack doctor who peddled it, 'Velnos' Vegetable Syrup' was also useful in the treatment of leprosy, gout, scrofula and tape worms. Swainson made a fortune from his herbal remedy, earning as much as £5,000 a year, and created a well-known botanical garden at Twickenham. A genus of flowering plants from Australasia, 'Swainsona', is named after him.

Star spangled boozer

The national anthem of the United States began life as a drinking song. 'The Star-Spangled Banner' (1898 sheet music for which is shown right) has words by Francis Scott Key, inspired by an incident in the War of 1812. But the tune was written by an 18th-century British musician for the Anacreontic Society. Named after the ancient Greek poet Anacreon, famous for verses in praise of wine, this was a club whose members gathered regularly for evenings of music, food and drink at which the song was sung. H

Nick Rennison, writer and journalist specialising in history

WAR THUNDER
New? GET YOUR FREE BONUS
PLAY NOW FOR FREE
WARTHUNDER.COM/TANKS
Gaijin
STEAM
Oculus VR
VIVE
PC
PS4
XBOX
Mac
12
www.pegi.info

Two pounds of pepper and ginger, a pair of scarlet trousers and **1,000 eels**

In medieval England, people paid their rents with all manner of items – and one of the most bizarre was eels. **John Wyatt Greenlee** considers why the fish was the perfect form of payment

BRIDGEMAN

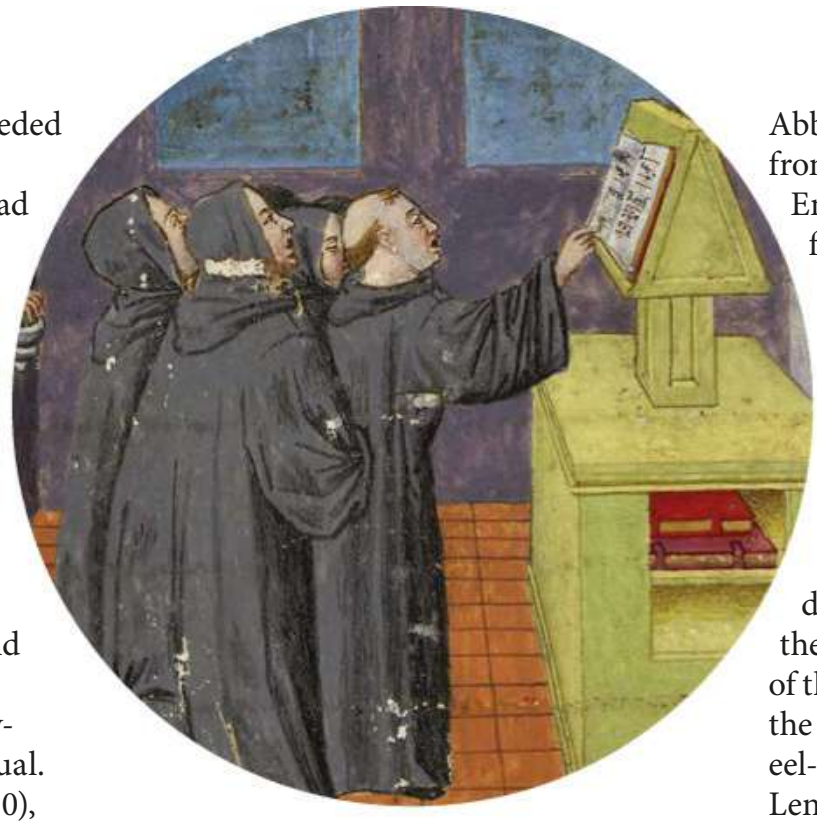
This 15th-century painting from a manuscript shows men fishing in a river. In medieval England, eels were both meals and de facto currency

In 1194, the monks of Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire needed a way across a local fen, and landowner Ralph Tuberville had a road that he was willing to lease. In return for the use of his elevated causeway, the Ramsey monks agreed to pay Tuberville a yearly in-kind rent of 1,000 eels, two pounds each of pepper and ginger, and a pair of scarlet trousers. The abbey later renegotiated the deal with Ralph's widow, who did not want any more trousers, instead demanding half a mark in coins and 60 cartloads of firewood. And 1,000 eels.

The idea of accepting eels as rental payment may strike modern readers as unusual. But in early medieval England (1000–1300), eel-rents were commonplace. During the period, before there was enough available coinage, landlords often accepted in-kind rents such as eggs, ale, grain, and, especially, eels. The fish were remarkably plentiful, accounting for 25 to 50 per cent of fish in England's rivers. Fishermen caught them using spears, nets and wicker traps, with huge numbers of eels being captured at mill dams.

And lords all across England wanted their share of this abundance. The 1086 Domesday survey has more records for rents of eels than of corn, and some of them were for quite impressive quantities of fish. The single largest Domesday rent came from the village of Harmston, in Lincolnshire, whose residents owed the Earl Hugh of Chester 75,000 eels annually. At the end of the 11th century there were more than 540,000 eels being paid as rent in England every year.

Landlords collected eels to eat, but they also used them to pay their own debts. The Ramsey monks were due more than 70,000 eels each year from their tenants, and some of those fish were used to pay for things that the monastery needed. As we have seen, the monks sent 1,000 eels to Ralph Tuberville and his widow. And in the mid-11th century the Abbot of Ramsey agreed to pay 4,000 eels each spring to Peterborough Abbey for the right to take building stone from a quarry at Barnack. In early medieval England, eels could be both a meal and a de facto currency.



Many monks were comfortable with accepting and offering eel payments in the early medieval period, says John Wyatt Greenlee

However, people did not usually trade in live eels, or even freshly killed ones. In most cases the fish were cured, through some combination of salting, smoking and drying, so that they could be more easily transported and stored. The eels needed to be preserved so that tenants could keep them unspoiled until rent was due, and the landlords could then stockpile them until they were ready to be eaten. Most of the fish were caught in the autumn, during the yearly downstream migration, but the eel-rents were generally due at the start of Lent, so in late winter or spring.

Limiting the libido

Eel-rents were frequently due at this time because of the Lenten prohibition against eating meat. The church understood an explicit connection between meat (*carnis*) and carnality (*carnalitas*), believing that eating flesh meat – itself the product of sexual union – made one lusty. Carnal desires were to be suppressed during Lent, and even married couples were expected to practise abstinence. So *carnis* was off the table. Eating fish, however, was thought to not excite the libido in the same way and so was permissible. Eels were an especially good choice – eel pies, complete with pears and spices, abounded – because medieval Europeans believed that the fish reproduced asexually.

This idea goes back at least to Aristotle and results from an ancient misunderstanding of the eels' mysterious life cycle. Eels breed in the open Atlantic – likely in the Sargasso Sea – before migrating to land and heading upriver as small (10cm or shorter) fish called elvers. Once they find suitable homes inland, eels stay and grow for more than a decade, until they eventually head back to sea to breed and die. Aristotle, who never made the connection between elvers and eels, wrote that the fish spring spontaneously out of the mud. Other ancient writers such as Pliny the Elder and Athenaeus followed Aristotle in asserting eels' asexual reproduction. This belief became so well-established in the European imagination that it persisted into at least the 16th century.

Part of the reason for this belief sprang from the fact that eels only develop obvious ovaries and testes at the very end of their lives, just before they head back out to sea. Aristotle looked unsuccessfully for eels' reproductive organs, and he was not alone. It was not until 1777 that an Italian named Carlo Mondini located eels' ovaries, and the

Eating eels was thought not to excite the libido, so they could be consumed during Lent

Pliny the Elder (pictured) was one of many ancient writers who thought eels reproduced asexually

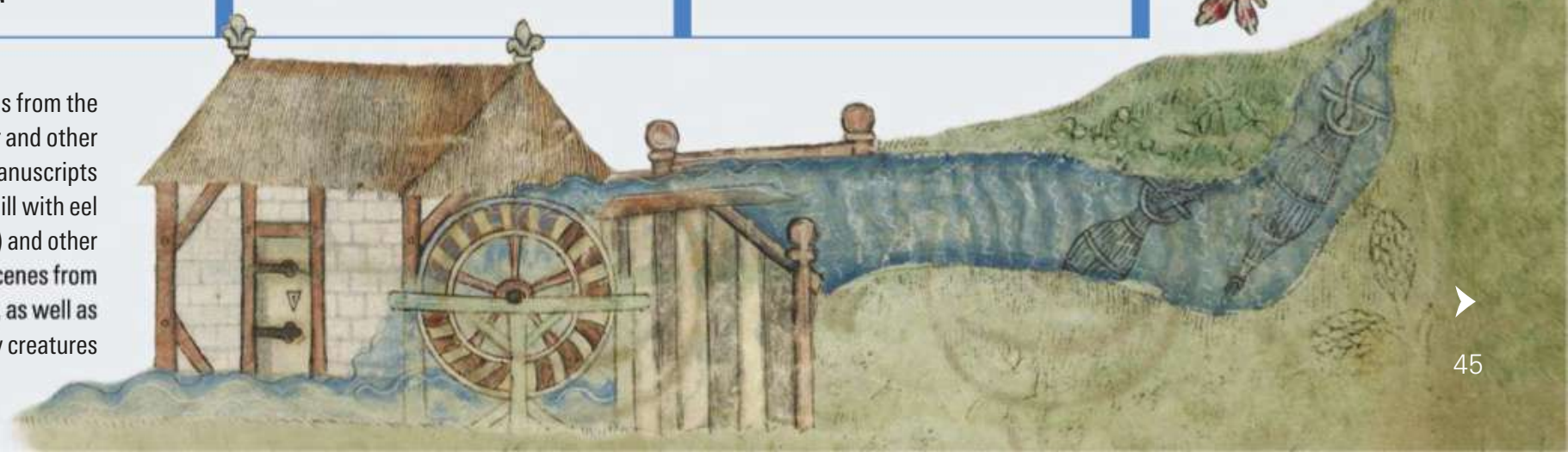
ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

A versatile bargaining chip

Eels were an important commodity, used for barter – especially in places like the Fens – and as an in-kind currency in early medieval England. But what were the fish actually worth? Individually, eels were quite cheap. In the mid-14th century, a single eel cost roughly the equivalent of 48 pence in today's currency. But the English caught millions of eels each year, leading to the question: what were eels worth relative to other commodities?

This table uses coinage costs from the 14th century

Item	Cost in coins	Equivalent value in eels
2 dozen eggs	1*d*	6
A gallon of first-rate ale	1.25*d*	8
A gallon of good Gascon wine	4*d*	25
1 goose	6*d*	38
1 sheep	1*s* 5*d*	106
Yearly rent for a cottage	5*s*	375
1 robe for a reeve (low-level official)	6*s* 4*d*	475
1 cow	9*s* 5*d*	706
Purchasing a two-storey cottage	£2	3,000
A brass funeral monument for a minor lord	£8	12,000



Illustrations from the Luttrell Psalter and other medieval manuscripts show a watermill with eel traps (far right) and other realistic scenes from medieval life, as well as fantasy creatures

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

This c15th-century depiction of Alexander the Great in a diving bell shows eels among other underwater creatures. In medieval England, eels thronged the rivers, accounting for up to 50 per cent of fish in the waterways, and they were caught in droves

search for their testes frustrated researchers – including Sigmund Freud – for a further 120 years. To medieval observers, not only did the fish not visibly reproduce, but they seemed to lack the means for doing so. Therefore, relying on classical authorities and their own experiences, Europeans in the Middle Ages believed eels to be asexual. And this made them excellent Lenten fare.

Dying demand

Eels' religious utility helps to explain the longevity of eel-rents in England. Most other in-kind rents had disappeared by the 13th century, but landlords continued to collect eel-rents in large numbers. Records from the 13th century show more than 450,000 eels being paid annually, with new rents still being initiated. The real decline in eel-rents came during the 14th century, with the dietary and monetary changes that followed the Black Death. After 1349 red meat became increasingly available to more people, as empty farmland was given over to pasturage. At the same time, the decreased population meant that there was more currency per capita in the system. Demand for eels dropped, and the century shows eel-rent totals of only about 34,000 fish. The 15th century saw a still sharper drop, and by 1500 eel-rents had largely disappeared.

The real decline in eel-rents came in the 1300s, with the changes that followed the Black Death

A few did hold on, though. In the 1680s a mill in Norfolk still rented out for £30 and 60 eels. But the mill's landlords – the Wyndham family of Felbrigg Hall – had frequent trouble collecting their payment. Eel-rents had deep historical traditions, going back to Domesday and even earlier. And the Wyndham's miller, it seems, felt that they belonged firmly in the past. H

John Wyatt Greenlee holds a PhD in medieval studies from Cornell University. He studies eels in English history and tweets as the Surprised Eel Historian *@greenleejw*

WEBSITE To find out more about eel-rents, visit **John Wyatt Greenlee**'s website: *historiacartarum.org/eel-rents-project*

BRIDGEMAN

Wellington

The Road to the Lion's Mound 1769-1815

Daniel Res

'The Duke of Wellington is not just a figure belonging to British history but also one belonging to that of the whole of Europe. In this imaginative work, Czech historian, Daniel Res, both reminds us of this fact and gives us a wealth of insight into the rich vein of material on the Napoleonic Wars to be found in the archives of mittel Europa'.

CHARLES ESDAILE, author of *Napoleon, France and Waterloo: The Eagle Rejected*, and *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803–1815*

Wellington – The Road to the Lion's Mound 1769-1815 is the first volume of the story of the 1st Duke of Wellington, the man who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo and became a celebrated hero not only in Britain and Europe, but throughout the world.

Daniel Res tells the gripping tale of Wellington's exploits, giving the book an almost novel-like readability. In it we discover the story of Wellington's youth in Ireland, his shaky beginnings in politics and the army, his first military success in India and his crucial engagements with Napoleonic France on the Iberian Peninsula as he fights his way from there to the south of France in 1814 – all events which culminate in the Battle of Waterloo the following year. Res presents Wellington not only as an ingenious commander, but also as a sensitive man, one often shaken by the realities and horrors of war.

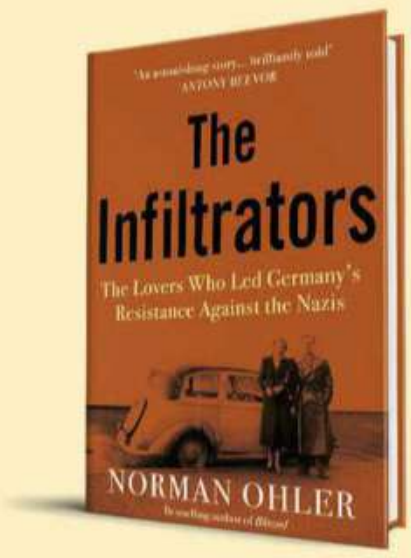
Wellington is revealed to be an excellent horseman, a passionate reader, a gentleman, an impeccable organizer, perfectionist and workaholic, as well as being a Conservative politician with a notably British sense of humour.

CITADELLE

ISBN: 9788090731127 FORMAT: HARDBACK RRP: £30 PAGES: 512
PUBLISHER: AMERIGO-CITADELLE RELEASE DATE: 30 SEP 2020

BLACK SWAN BOOK PROMOTION

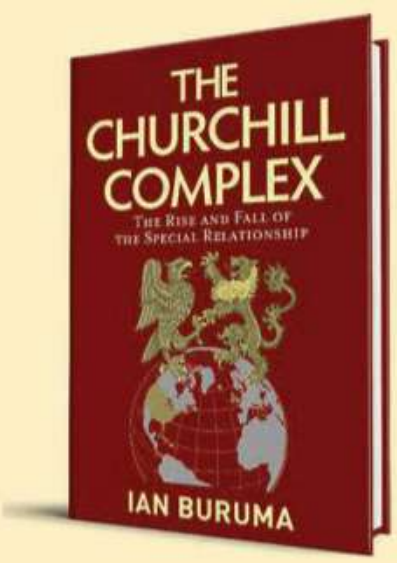
Essential History from Atlantic Books



THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY OF TWO IDEALISTIC YOUNG LOVERS WHO LED THE ANTI-NAZI RESISTANCE IN THE DARKENING HEART OF BERLIN.

'An astonishing story of the anti-Nazi resistance – a story of love, incredible bravery and self-sacrifice, which could end only in death – and it is brilliantly told.'

ANTONY BEEVOR, AUTHOR OF *THE SECOND WORLD WAR*



AN INSIGHTFUL HISTORY OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UK AND THE USA, NOW UNDER THREAT WITH THE ELECTION OF DONALD TRUMP AND BREXIT.

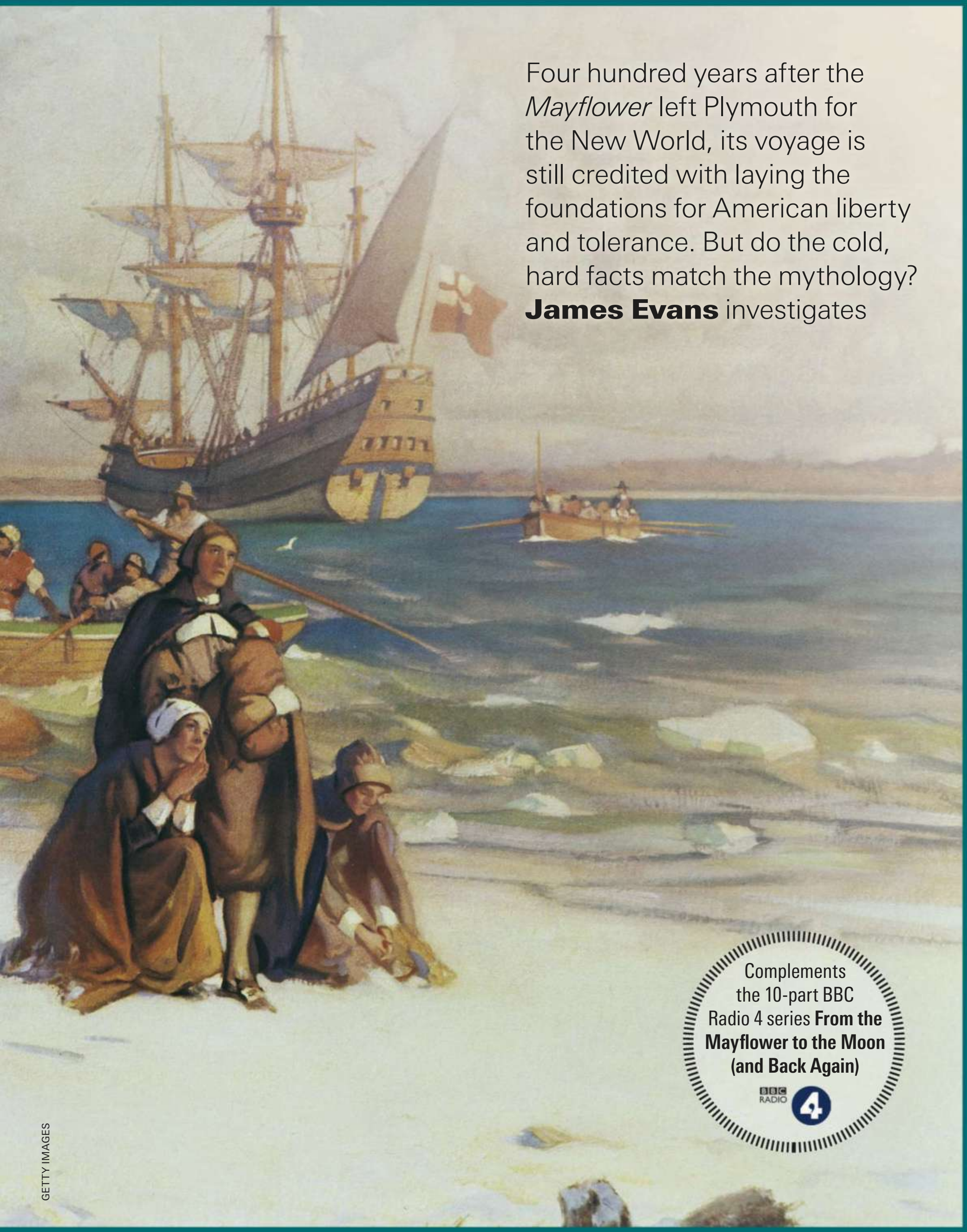
'Buruma is an admirably thoughtful writer.'

DOMINIC SANDBROOK, *THE TIMES*

AVAILABLE NOW

The **voyage** that made **America**?

The 'Pilgrims' stride onto American soil in 1620 after crossing the Atlantic on the *Mayflower*, as shown in a 20th-century painting. The colony that they established was – initially, at least – a genuinely enlightened place, writes James Evans



Four hundred years after the *Mayflower* left Plymouth for the New World, its voyage is still credited with laying the foundations for American liberty and tolerance. But do the cold, hard facts match the mythology? **James Evans** investigates

Complements the 10-part BBC Radio 4 series **From the Mayflower to the Moon (and Back Again)**

BBC RADIO 4

GETTY IMAGES

The myth of the Mayflower

Passengers sign the Mayflower Compact, as depicted in a 19th-century painting. This document, which required signatories to abide by the law for the "general good of the colony", has been hailed as a cornerstone of American democracy

After 10 gruelling weeks at sea, the *Mayflower* finally dropped anchor off Cape Cod on 11 November 1620 (Old Style calendar). More than 130 people were squashed onboard what seems a tiny ship by today's standards; the vessel was just under 100 feet long and 25 feet wide. Delayed departure meant that, during the second half of the voyage, in October, savage storms forced sails to be taken down. A structural beam of the ship was cracked, mended by the carpenter using a "great iron screw". A man called John Howland was hurled by a wave into the ocean, managing to cling onto a rope and so to save his own life. Many passengers, some of whom had never even seen the sea before, let alone been on it, lay down and groaned, feeling dreadfully sick.

The storms blew them north of their immediate target: the Hudson river, near modern-day New York. It was already a month later than they had hoped to reach America and their brief efforts to sail south from Cape Cod (in modern-day Massachusetts) were foiled by the currents.

As the colonists were not in Virginia, their ultimate intended destination, some passengers sought to take advantage of their circumstances, stating that they were not answerable to anyone. They would, they declared, "use their own liberty; for none had power to command them".

What happened next would seal the *Mayflower*'s place in American history. In response to this threat to go it alone, the colonists decided that all the adult males among them would draft and sign a civil covenant that committed themselves and their dependants to all laws later decreed, "for the general good of the colony".

The Mayflower Compact – as this document is now known – became enshrined as what US statesman Calvin Coolidge called, on the 300th anniversary of the ship's landing, the "liberty based on law and order" which has lain at the heart of American democracy. This principle has not, of course, always been extended to every segment of society. But, given that the compact required *all* adult men aboard the ship to endorse it – servants, as well as the rich and powerful – at the time, it was truly radical

The signing of the Mayflower Compact has since become a fundamental origin myth of the United States. But did it truly shape the evolution of a nation? Or were its ideals snuffed out in rapidly expanding New England? Before considering these questions, it's worth considering the events that took the colonists to the Americas in the first place.

Reaching the New World had been a mighty undertaking, one that was fraught with danger. The voyage got off to a troubled start: before they'd even left England, the emigrants realised to their dismay that the *Mayflower*'s companion ship, the *Speedwell*, was as "leaky as a sieve". They were forced into Plymouth harbour in order for repairs to be attempted on the *Speedwell* – during which time the passengers used up precious supplies. The salvage operation failed, and all but 20 of the *Speedwell*'s passengers had to squeeze onto the *Mayflower*.

As a result, when it finally sailed out of Plymouth in early September 1620, the *Mayflower* was packed with 102 passengers. These consisted of both Protestant separatists ('Pilgrims', as they later became known – religious dissenters seeking to practise their faith free from persecution in the New World), and a larger proportion of 'strangers',

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

TIMELINE **The English in North America**

A man believed to be a chieftain on Roanoke Island, the site of two unsuccessful English colonies

1585
The first of two unsuccessful attempts to **found an English colony at Roanoke** takes place, in what is now North Carolina. The fate of the colonists of the second expedition remains a mystery.

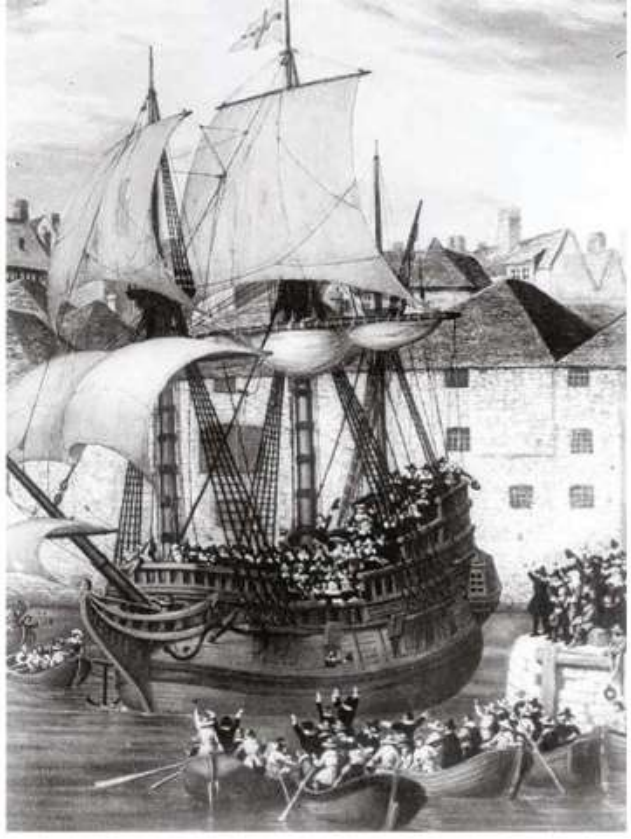
1607
The first permanent settlement is established at **Jamestown, Virginia** by the Virginia Company of London. By the time it is abandoned in 1699, English settlement in America is securely established.

1610
English settlers establish **the Newfoundland colony**. This settlement has significance beyond its small population – for, thanks to its survival, the idea of transatlantic travel and settlement becomes entrenched.

1620
On 11 November (Old Style calendar), after an unsuccessful attempt to sail south, the ***Mayflower* returns to Provincetown Harbour in Cape Cod** and lays anchor. Shortly after, its passengers set foot on American soil and begin work on the historic settlement at Plymouth.

A reconstruction of the *Mayflower* at Plymouth, Massachusetts

1628
Another group of Puritans establish the **Massachusetts Bay Colony**. Throughout the 1630s, the migration of Puritans from England is substantial.



Well-wishers bid the *Mayflower* farewell as it leaves Plymouth for America, 6 September 1620 (Old Style calendar). Ahead lay 10 weeks of "perils and miseries"

Our map shows the location of the *Mayflower*'s first landing on American soil in 1620, and the names of Native American tribes that occupied the surrounding area, east of the Hudson river

who were emigrating for economic reasons. There were also around 30 crewmembers. It is reckoned there were 31 children on board, one of whom was born during the voyage (christened Oceanus). No previous transatlantic voyage had borne so heavy a weight of passengers and cargo in relation to its tonnage.

On the "furious" sea, later in the voyage, the cramped and uncomfortable colonists faced much "trouble and danger" – many "perils and miseries".

Coats of iron

Once the colonists reached America, their troubles were not yet over. The weather in New England was freezing cold, and it got worse. When the colonists ventured inland near their future settlement, they were forced to wade ashore, thigh-deep through what seemed an interminable stretch of icy water. Water promptly froze and the ice clung to their clothes like "coats of iron". For months on end, inches of snow carpeted the ground.

However, compared to the depleted European waters with which they were familiar, the natural life in the New World's waterways was astonishing. According to the Pilgrim account *Mourt's Relation*, there were more birds than "ever we saw", while the vast, dark shadows of whales moved silently beneath the surface of deeper water. Crew and passengers alike cursed the fact that they lacked the right equipment to catch them.

The weather in New England was freezing cold. The ice clung to their clothes like "coats of iron"

On the long hook of land where they landed at Cape Cod, there was no fresh water. Settlers continued living on the ship. The location was also dangerously exposed, any settlement visible from the sea. As the colonists explored the bay during early December, they finally found a suitable site inland, with trees of all kinds – oaks, pines, juniper, birch – growing thickly upon hills which tumbled down to the water's edge. However, the winter weather and frozen soil often restricted construction work. They called their new settlement Plymouth, having left the old one behind on the shores of England.

A lethal winter lay ahead of them. More than 40 of the *Mayflower*'s 102 passengers died during that first season, along with a similar proportion of the approximately 30-strong crew. But enough of them survived to establish a colony that will forever be associated with the United States' foundation.

That colony was one of the first settlements in a huge area of land known as New

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/MAP: PAUL HEWITT–BATTLEFIELD DESIGN

1639

The **outbreak of civil war in Britain** brings the Puritan migration to an end. Some emigres return to fight in what seems a divine cause.

Puritans are shown leaving England for North America in a contemporary hand-coloured woodcut

1660

Charles II is restored to the English throne. This is a major event in the colonial world, too, with colonists in Virginia professing their loyalty to the Stuart house.

Charles II at his coronation in 1661. The new king soon commanded the loyalty of colonists in Virginia

1664

The **Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam** is seized by English forces loyal to the Duke of York (the future James II). In the duke's honour, it is **renamed New York**.

March 1681

The province of Pennsylvania is formally established. It very rapidly becomes one of the largest and most **attractive American destinations, particularly for Quakers.**

1686

As part of the post-Restoration move towards direct royal control of the American colonies, the Dominion of New England replaces around half a dozen formerly independent colonies or provinces. **The dominion collapses after word of the 'Glorious Revolution' in England of 1688–89** prompts similar risings west of the Atlantic.

England. But, ironically, many of the Pilgrims who sailed on the *Mayflower* had, for the decade before they set sail for America, not lived in England at all.

Most of the Pilgrims who journeyed across the Atlantic in the autumn of 1620 originally hailed from a district where Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and south Yorkshire meet. But their radical Protestant beliefs – which had seen them detach themselves from the English church – had exposed them to harassment and expulsion at home. And so, in the first years of the 17th century, many had moved across the North Sea to Holland.

The congregation worshipped in Amsterdam – that "fair of all the sects" – and then in the university town of Leiden. During the 1610s, the congregation swelled from around 100 to 500, with many travelling to join the Pilgrims "from diverse parts of England".

In Holland, more than half the community worked in the textile trade, but some also devoted themselves to printing, producing books banned in England.

An engraving shows Spanish soldiers killing Protestants in Haarlem, c1573. By 1620, the prospect of a Spanish return to the streets of northern Dutch cities loomed ever larger in the Pilgrims' minds

The word of God

For years the Pilgrims had pored over the command to Abraham, recorded in the book of Genesis, to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto the land that I will show thee." Like other biblical history, the Pilgrims did not read the text as a record, but as a direct command. God no longer spoke in dreams or visions as in ancient times, but directly, through his holy book. The words needed only to be "rightly understood and applied" – an endeavour about which Puritan Christians, reading the Bible freely now that it was translated, worried incessantly.

The command to Abraham posed one problem in particular. The meaning of "Get thee out of thy country" was obvious. Yet "Unto the land that I will show thee" was open to interpretation. How would this land be revealed? Was this Holland – those waterlogged lowlands in which, for now at least, an unusual degree of religious liberty prevailed – or somewhere else entirely?

The question grew increasingly urgent. In 1609, a 12-year truce had been signed with Habsburg Spain which divided the Low Countries into a Spanish south and an independent north, guaranteeing that places including Amsterdam and Leiden would not have their religious diversity suppressed. This religious toleration led to massive expansion and economic development, with settlements sprouting vast encampments within the marshy fields beyond the city walls.

Soon, however, this arrangement would expire, putting the community in grave danger. Under Spanish rule, anyone convicted of Protestant beliefs had been ruthlessly punished: burned, beheaded or buried alive. A branch of the Inquisition had been established. Memories of brutal sieges and suppressions – of Leiden in 1573–74, Antwerp in 1576 – were fresh.

Many thought that New England was an island, cut off, as England was, from mainland Europe

For the Puritans in Leiden, this was no purely human conflict: Satan's armies were marching nearby. Nothing now was audible, one wrote, but the "beating of drums and preparing for war".

Increasingly, members of the community felt drawn to leave Holland behind and set out for "some place of better advantage and less danger". It was felt that, in the western parts of the world, God's favour would perhaps fall in "this last age". The "youngest and strongest part" might lead the way, leaving behind these lands peopled by "close-fisted and unmerciful men" and beset by "bitter contention". The newly discovered America – "a spacious land" that was "fruitful and fit for habitation" – could perhaps be this place of better advantage.

Certainly there were fears about travelling to the New World. Some who had left their home once already were getting too old for another more significant move, "out of a thronged place into a wide wilderness". It was easy for pessimists to find "precedents of ill success and lamentable miseries". The more optimistic pointed out that previous emigrants had often been motivated by greed or vanity: "carnal" reasons. No wonder God had not smiled upon them. "We verily believe and trust," Pilgrim leaders assured themselves by contrast, that "the Lord is with us."

But where did the Pilgrims think that they were going? Even after all this time, the American coastline was described as unknown. Many thought that New England was an island – cut off, as England was, from the European continent. The geography

GETTY IMAGES

of the two places was not dissimilar. There were no high mountains, but there were dales and meadows. The soil was "somewhat like the soil in Kent and Essex", while the climate was moderate and healthy, if colder in winter.

Whereas in Europe there were clear signs of the age of human civilisation – terrible wars and religious clashes seeming to presage a final struggle when God would punish his people for "wanton abuse of the Gospel" – in America the divine plan seemed at an altogether earlier stage. Here it was "but the first days… the dawning of this New World".

Demented savagery

Even now, on the 400th anniversary of the dawning of those "first days", the Mayflower's story proclaims principles with which the US remains broadly happy – obvious caveats, such as its lack of gender equality, aside.

However, what unfolded over the two decades after the *Mayflower* first anchored in America casts serious doubt upon the centrality of the vessel's status in American history. The colony was, genuinely, an uncommonly tolerant and enlightened place.

GETTY IMAGES

A missionary preaches to the Native Americans of Massachusetts, c1650. By now, colonists were imposing their values on the indigenous population, encouraging them to dress like the English – and worship the English God

But in a short space of time, New England moved from championing these ideals of liberty to the misogynist mutterings and authoritarian instincts of John Winthrop – the Suffolk lawyer who led the huge Puritan migration to the area in the 1630s – as well as the demented savagery of the Salem witch trials at the end of the century. How did it happen, it was asked in 1645, "that the persecuted have become persecutors?"

In New England, huge numbers of Puritans had soon followed the Pilgrims. They were not separatists, although they did disown what seemed to them a Church of England that remained dangerously Catholic. Thousands settled in the coastal and inland farming communities just north of Plymouth. Whereas the latter's population reached perhaps 2,000 at the close of the 1630s, the rival Puritan colony of Massachusetts boasted more than four times that number.

Plymouth had always been welcoming, interested and inquisitive about Native American cultures (attitudes encapsulated in the Thanksgiving tradition of celebrating their first harvest with local Wampanoag people, who had given them agricultural assistance in return for defensive help against their enemy, the Narragansett tribe). By contrast, the colonies of Massachusetts and its satellite, Connecticut, were much more hostile towards the indigenous people – convinced that divine destiny required them to impose their own ideas.

Plymouth, over time, moved towards the Massachusetts way of thinking – Winthrop urging that all Native Americans be regarded as a "common enemy". The trust which had existed between Plymouth and the neighbouring Native American communities dwindled. An old idea, strong in Plymouth, that Native Americans were the descendants of biblical Lost Tribes of Israel disappeared during the later 17th century.

As the English settlements expanded, their sense of doing "the work of God in the wilderness" became, as the historian Alfred A Cave observed, a "vital part of the mythology of the American frontier". In the Pequot War (fought between the indigenous Pequot tribe and the colonists), mutual trust vanished while the self-perception of English colonies as militarised islands surrounded by enemies grew. 'Praying Towns' – where Native Americans lived like the English, worshipping the English God – reveal the English imposing their values. So does the fact that indigenous people wore English clothes, or cut their hair in English fashions.

Towards the end of the century, separate charters were revoked, a larger territory – called the Dominion of New England – was created, and direct royal rule was established. Taxes began to be imposed from London, without consent. The seeds of the American Revolution had been planted.

So how should all this colour our view of the *Mayflower*? To question whether the reality of its voyage matches its status in the American psyche is not to deny its significance in the nation's story. Much in the Pilgrims' attitudes towards local populations and the principles of equality and liberty *does* represent a potent example for the present. It's just that, when considering this celebrated episode in US history, we should surely address the facts, as well as the myth. H

James Evans is a historian and writer. His books include *Emigrants: Why the English Sailed to the New World* (W&N, 2017)

LISTEN **From the Mayflower to the Moon (and Back Again)**, a 10-part series on pioneering American journeys, airs on BBC Radio 4 in September

Last line of defence

A woman takes a seat in a government-approved shelter in York, January 1981. Unlike some countries, Britain placed the onus on individuals to find their own means of protecting themselves in the event of a nuclear war, writes Taras Young

PREPARING FOR ARMAGE

GETTY IMAGES

DDON

In the 1980s, as Britons' fear of a nuclear war escalated, the government issued a raft of guidance on how to survive the apocalypse. But, writes **Taras Young**, if ministers expected a grateful nation to embrace their advice, they were in for a shock

In 1983, in the middle of a very ordinary London housing estate, a van driver called Ben Hayden unloaded his shopping from Sainsbury's and started building his own fallout shelter. As he did so, armageddon seemed closer than ever. Following the relatively peaceful period of detente in the 1970s, during which diplomatic relations between east and west eased, tensions had again been stirred up by revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Western politics had shifted to the right, with Margaret Thatcher's rise to power in the UK being quickly followed by the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in the US. The pressure was rising to a point that hadn't been felt since the Cuban missile crisis two decades earlier; for an anxious British public, nuclear confrontation seemed almost inevitable.

When the government announced, in 1980, that the US would deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles on UK soil, the British public's nuclear worries were brought to a head. "What pushed it to the front of people's concerns was the plan to install short-range missiles at Greenham Common and Molesworth, and the big demonstrations that the decision provoked," says Philip Steadman, emeritus professor of Urban and Built Form Studies at UCL. "That made the issue more immediate and personal. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament became the bogeyman of the right, and there was an acrimonious and nervous political atmosphere."

Ian Sanders, who now hosts the Cold War Conversations podcast, says the threat of nuclear war loomed large in the public consciousness. "It definitely felt like nuclear war could break out at any time, either by accident or design. As someone in my early twenties, with a life to live, it really did feel as though the end of the world could happen any moment."

A little consumer test

To help prepare the people of Britain for a potential nuclear attack, in 1981 the UK Home Office published *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*. Available for just 50 pence, this slim pamphlet aimed to advise the masses on building their own fallout shelters. It gave basic guidance on constructing a hideaway where you could live for up to two weeks after nuclear attack, avoiding – hopefully – the worst of the radiation.

Hayden, a member of Tower Hamlets CND, decided to put this advice to the test in the most practical way possible. Following the instructions to the letter, he would perform what local punk poet Alan Gilbey wryly described as a "little consumer test",

putting up a fallout shelter in his housing estate and living there for two weeks. For Hayden, though, this was a sombre undertaking. "I'm building this seriously," he told a local reporter. "When this shelter is completed, it'll prove to everyone what a farce the arrangements for surviving after the bomb are."

Hayden stocked the shelter with everything the government recommended, plus a few home comforts: plenty of tins of food, a bag of clean clothes, two water tanks, waste buckets, books, a sleeping bag, a pillow, a guitar, and his diary. Crawling into his makeshift home late on a Monday afternoon, he was upbeat as he adjusted to life in this cramped new world. On that first day, he wasn't alone: journalists did their best to clamber into the shelter to conduct interviews; he heard people from the local estate talking about him (one opined that he must be a "nutter"); and local children gave him a fright by shouting down the ventilation shaft, their voices amplified in the enclosed, tube-like space below.

Soon, Hayden was questioning his own sanity. Four days in, he started to lose track of time, and there wasn't enough clean air in the shelter to sustain a candle. "This place really begins to get on top of me," he told his diary. "I get a slight feeling of claustrophobia, and I take a deep breath of smelly, stale air, and think to myself: 'That's better.'" As the second week began, the toilet waste he had collected had started to decay, causing the waste bags to leak. His urine bucket was full after 10 days; the food tins began to grow mouldy, and an infestation of insects had joined him in the shelter. "I'm reaching the end of my humour... I have no ability to concentrate on anything now; and spend my time just lying here feeling like a shit bag," he wrote.

Beautiful mud

Happily, his two-week stint in the fallout shelter came to an end, and Hayden emerged into the sunlight. Walking out proved difficult – it was the first time he'd stood up in two weeks, after all – but he found he was not alone: as well as a delegation from the press and three television crews, around 200 local people had arrived to greet him. In the playground of a nearby primary school, children watched and cheered. "It was pissing down with rain, there was mud everywhere, and it was beautiful," he wrote.

Spending two weeks in a makeshift nuclear bunker had been gruelling. But, while it had taken a psychological toll, Hayden was under no illusion that the experience had prepared him for the real thing. "The exercise has given me little or no insight into how I might cope," he wrote. "To make more than a

A press report on Ben Hayden's "little consumer test". In 1983, the London van driver lived in a self-built nuclear shelter for 14 days

Hero's welcome greets bunker survivor

CND man completes 14-day test in nuclear shelter—Paul Keel reports

THE welcome which greeted Ben Hayden when he crawled out of his do-it-yourself nuclear bunker in Limehouse after a two-week trial incarceration was hardly the reception that he would expect after a holocaust.

More than a hundred applauding East Londoners — not to mention newsmen and cheering children from a nearby primary school — were there to watch his emergence from the two-person nuclear shelter which he had built and occupied, using Home Office guidelines.

But according to Illtyd Harrington, deputy leader of the Labour-controlled Greater London Council, neither Ben nor the welcoming party would have survived if the test had been attempted in an actual nuclear attack.

"Under the present Government, London's parks have been designated as mass graves for the 3 million who will die." Mr Harrington claimed yesterday in what, due to the force of sudden circumstances, became a pre-emptive strike in the coming general election campaign.

Mr Hayden, a 23-year-old van driver from Limehouse and a member of the local branch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, had insisted from the beginning of his exercise that it was intended as an objective test of the Government's advice to the population on how to protect itself from the effects of a nuclear raid.

But over his past fortnight of confinement (the time recommended by the Home Office) in the tent-sized bunker buried in the soil of London's decaying dockland, he only suffered one interference from the Soviet Union.

A reporter from a Russian news agency tried to interview him by shouting down the wire-wool filled drainpipe which served as the ventilation system for the nuclear bunker.

When he emerged yesterday to stand up for the first time in two weeks, Mr Hayden needed assistance to walk. He recovered quickly from an initial bout of shock and made his first criticism of the Home Office guidelines on surviving a nuclear war. "You'd need more buckets for sanitation," he said.

Roger hands removing the covering from the do-it-yourself bunker in which CND supporter Ben Hayden spent a fortnight

Ben Hayden faces up to daylight after 14 days below ground . . .
Pictures by Roger Tooth

Clementine Churchill and Herbert Morrison examine a Morrison table shelter, 1941. Four decades later, government advice was still leaning heavily on this shelter's design

Protesters dressed as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in a makeshift nuclear fallout shelter, Manchester, June 1984. Left-leaning local authorities ridiculed the government's Protect and Survive guidance (shown bottom of the picture) for being unworkable

GETTY IMAGES/GUARDIAN NEWSPAPERS

superficial comparison would be naive in the extreme… I was not alone. People came and talked and joked – and I looked forward to seeing them again. I knew I would."

What the bunker experiment showed was that the advice presented by the government's *Domestic Nuclear Shelters* pamphlet only seemed practical on the surface. Hayden had found it tough, and he had had all the advantages of building it in peacetime. With no geopolitical crisis, there was the luxury of time: the shelter took a week to construct and provision. Building materials were readily available; he had the money to buy them, and a plot of land to build on. And there was no nuclear attack to withstand; no blast to damage the outside of the bunker; no radioactive fallout to clog the ventilation pipes and his lungs; no confused and agitated survivors seeking food and shelter. His experience led him to be dismissive of the government's advice. "This shelter shows it up to be entirely unrealistic," he told a local reporter. "But I don't think it'll change anything."

And perhaps one reason why the government's advice was so 'unrealistic' was the fact that much of their guidance had not progressed beyond instructions that were created in the midst of the Second World War. During this conflict, the government had issued pamphlets not only on safety during air raids, but on how to best prepare homes for attack. This included guidance on the construction of Anderson shelters – essentially curved corrugated steel tubes, usually buried outside – and Morrison shelters: cheap metal tables with mesh sides, to be used indoors. These could be effective against Luftwaffe raids, but the end of the war brought with it a new threat: the atomic bomb.

Initial public information on the bomb assumed an air of the Blitz spirit: "At Nagasaki, nearly seven out of ten people within a mile from the bomb lived to tell their experiences," claimed a 1952 pamphlet. "Shelters of the last war standard would give good protection against [an] atomic blast." But, as both sides in the Cold War tested and refined the hydrogen bomb, with its mind-bogglingly destructive power, the magnitude of the threat really began to worry the British government.

Unlike some countries, however, Britain chose not to make provisions for costly communal fallout shelters as part of its civil defence plans. The onus was instead placed on individuals to find their own means of protecting themselves and their families. This was reflected in detailed public information booklets on the nuclear menace, prepared by the Home Office. The first of these, 1957's *The Hydrogen Bomb*, sought to explain this new kind of weapon to the public; however, beyond a few basic diagrams, it gave no useful advice on how to protect yourself from its effects. Its 1963 follow-up, *Advising the Householder on Protection Against Nuclear Attack*, included a few practical measures on creating a fallout refuge, such as staying in a room in the centre of your home, blocking up windows with sandbags and heavy furniture, or hiding in a trench outside, "deep enough to provide comfortable standing room".

"This thing is phoney," said Labour MP Emrys Hughes. "Put it in the waste paper basket!"

Advising the Householder on Protection Against Nuclear Attack was roundly criticised. It was lambasted by members of the public, lampooned on the BBC's satirical programme *That Was the Week that Was*, and even derided by the majority-Conservative Estimates Committee, who complained it gave the public "entirely the wrong impression". In parliament, Labour MP Emrys Hughes condemned the booklet for providing impractical advice, and gave his own summary of the Estimates Committee's position: "This thing is phoney; this thing is rubbish; put it in the waste paper basket!"

Fire and fallout

Following this debacle, new official advice about nuclear attack was slow to materialise. In November 1974, during Harold Wilson's Labour government, Home Office officials came together to discuss the replacement of the unloved, and by now deeply outdated, 1963 guide. This led to the creation of a new public information campaign that was to become even more infamous than its predecessor: 'Protect and Survive'.

Having learned from bitter experience, the Home Office was at pains to ensure that Protect and Survive – which comprised a series of TV and radio spots, as well as an accompanying booklet – would not gain adverse public attention. To that end, they opted to keep the programme under wraps until it was needed: only a small batch of booklets was printed in 1976 and distributed privately to those involved in emergency planning, such as chief executives of local authorities and chiefs of police.

Rendered in brown and orange, the cover of the Protect and Survive booklet evoked fire

and fallout, with a nuclear family – father, mother, son and daughter – enclosed in a protective circle at its centre. Inside, though, the advice was remarkably similar to that of previous decades: know the warning signals, stay at home, construct an 'inner refuge', and ensure adequate water and supplies.

It wasn't until the spring of 1980, when investigations by *The Times* and the BBC's *Panorama* exposed the deficiencies of the British civil defence programme, that Protect and Survive came to prominence. The Thatcher administration, newly in power, found their hand forced by public and media demand. They gave the go-ahead for the booklet, with a few tactful changes, to be reprinted and put on sale.

Alongside Protect and Survive, a working group had been established to design and test fallout shelter designs. The outcome of their work, published in early 1981, was *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*. A pamphlet branded with the Protect and Survive logo, containing a potted version of the earlier booklet's advice, it also gave DIY instructions for five types of fallout shelter. Two of these were unquestionably based directly on the Morrison and Anderson shelters designed in the Second World War. In fact, a larger, more detailed technical manual on shelter construction, which the working group developed for tradesmen and engineers, contained step-by-step instructions lifted directly – illustrations and all – from a 1942 guide to erecting a Morrison shelter. The most notable change was the removal of the pipe that one of the figures in the earlier guide had been shown smoking.

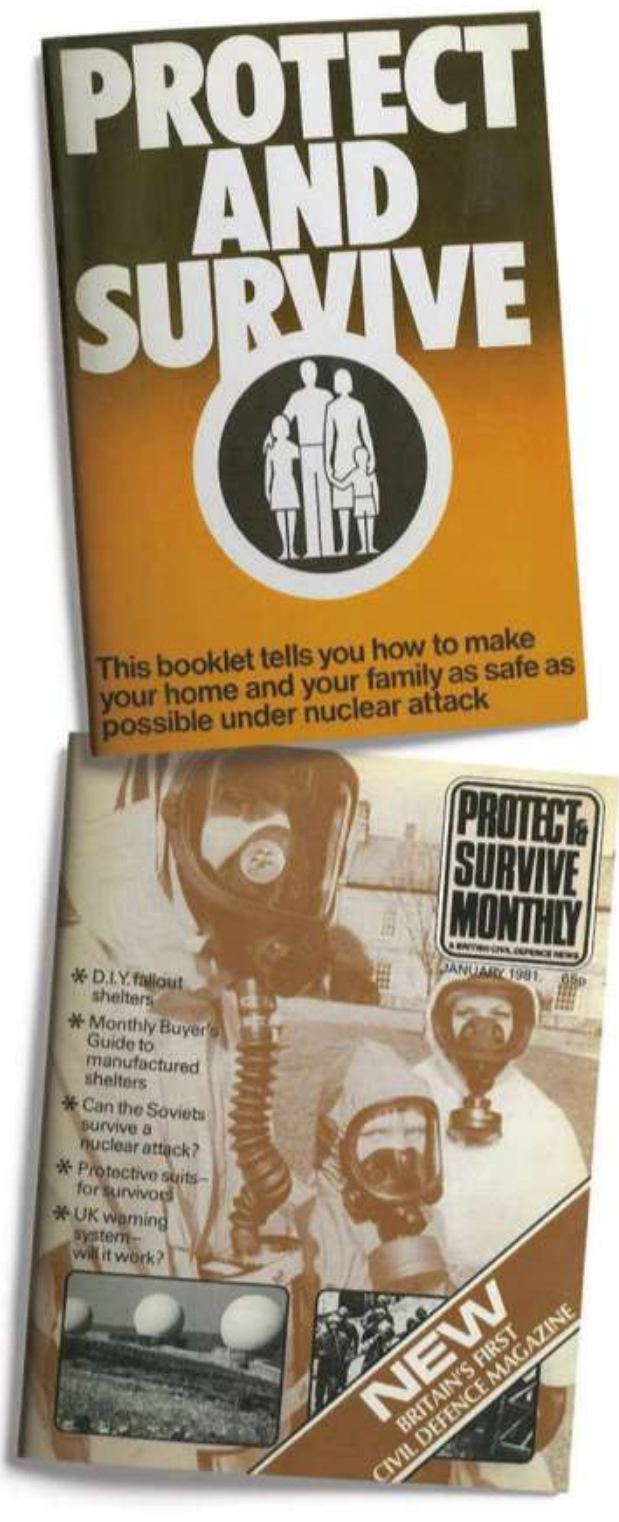
Quite daft proposals

The last-minute amendments to Protect and Survive weren't enough to save it, and *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*, from ridicule. The campaign was a gift for leftwing local authorities, who viewed the idea of civil defence as unworkable and actively resisted central government's attempts to shoulder them with the responsibility of managing the public in the aftermath of nuclear attack. The Greater London Council called the government's booklets "quite daft", while an episode of the hugely popular sitcom *Only Fools and Horses*, screened in 1981, played up the obvious inadequacies of the plans by having the flat-dwelling Trotter family construct a nuclear shelter on the roof of Nelson Mandela House, their central London tower block.

For academic Philip Steadman, the *Domestic Nuclear Shelters* booklet offered a useful way to interrogate the government's planning assumptions for nuclear attack. "I got involved in various teach-ins and demonstrations, and thought to myself: 'What can I do to help?'" he says. "I imagined that, being an architect, I might be able to say something about shelters, so I got hold of the *Domestic Nuclear Shelters* manual. I think it must have been there that I saw the Home Office estimates of blast damage. It immediately struck me that the calculations of areas of land affected couldn't be right."

Largely focusing on shelter construction, *Protect and Survive Monthly* was a one-stop shop for the paranoid consumer

The Protect and Survive campaign (below) is now regarded as a symbol of the futility of government guidance. But, as *Protect and Survive Monthly* (bottom) proved, there was a market for magazines offering advice on how to prepare for armageddon


PROTECT AND SURVIVE
This booklet tells you how to make your home and your family as safe as possible under nuclear attack
PROTECT & SURVIVE MONTHLY
JANUARY 1981 65p
* D.I.Y. fallout shelters
* Monthly Buyer's Guide to manufactured shelters
* Can the Soviets survive a nuclear attack?
* Protective suits – for survivors
* UK warning system – will it work?
NEW
BRITAIN'S FIRST CIVIL DEFENCE MAGAZINE

Digging into the figures, Steadman discovered that the numbers the Home Office had come up with were wildly inaccurate. While *Domestic Nuclear Shelters* claimed that 5 per cent of the UK's land area would suffer the serious effects of a nuclear blast, Steadman found at least 60 per cent of the population would be affected. He published his findings in *New Scientist*, which called the government's figures "highly suspect".

Not everyone was critical, though, and some took the government's advice at face value. Magazines such as *Protect and Survive Monthly* were ready to cater to their needs. Launched in January 1981, with a foreword by Leon Brittan, the minister responsible for civil defence, the magazine was a one-stop shop for the paranoid consumer. Early articles focused largely on shelter construction, but also covered the effects of radiation on agriculture, practical first aid, and even a guide to creating your own DIY fallout suit.

Around them was a plethora of advertisements for pre-built fallout shelters, offering peace of mind – at a price. The government had encouraged the mainstream press not to run advertisements for such products, but readers of *PSM* had their choice of dozens, with names like 'The SURVIVA' and 'FIBA-MOLE'. One advertisement even subverted memories of the Blitz spirit, showing an archive photo of smiling Londoners sheltering in a tube station, with the chilling caption: "Next time, it won't be so easy to hide." For those who couldn't afford to build or buy protection, there was also the option of hiding in the natural fallout shelter provided by Britain's disused metal mines.

Today, despite relations between east and west becoming frostier once more, the nuclear threat is far from most people's minds. Yet nuclear weapons have not gone away, and their presence – combined with new risks driven by climate change – means that the Doomsday Clock is as close to midnight now as it has ever been. In an age of instant communication, social media and fake news, it's unlikely that government advice of the kind seen during the Cold War will ever make a comeback. Hopefully, government communicators can learn from the mistakes of their predecessors. H

Taras Young is a writer and researcher. He is the author of *Nuclear War in the UK* (Four Corners Books, 2019)

ALAMY

BOOKS

THE HOLOCAUST

"The book is a powerful example of the ability of human beings to survive at all costs"

Laurence Rees on *Survivors* by Rebecca Clifford (pictured) › page 66

BIOGRAPHY

"Pankhurst pursued a relentlessly political life, collecting causes as other people collected stamps"

Diane Atkinson reviews Rachel Holmes' *Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel* › page 64

RICHARD III

"When Henry Tudor invaded, Richard ploughed headlong into his own obliteration"

Lauren Johnson on Rosemary Horrox's *Richard III: A Failed King?* › page 67

INTERVIEW

"Race was the signal that determined where people would fit into the American caste system"

Isabel Wilkerson discusses her new book, *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* › page 60

FICTION

"There was a worry that Manchester's large Irish community represented an enemy within"

Ian McGuire talks about his new novel, *The Abstainer* › page 69

GETTY IMAGES

INTERVIEW / ISABEL WILKERSON

"Caste is like the wind. You may not be able to see it, but it's a quietly destructive force"

ISABEL WILKERSON talks to Ellie Cawthorne about her new book, which argues that caste has been a corrosive thread running throughout the history of the United States

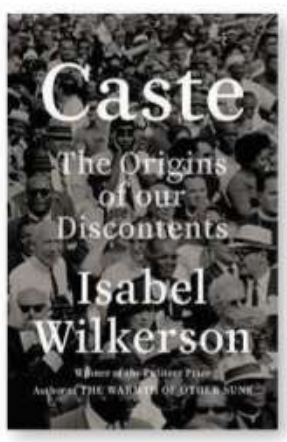
Ellie Cawthorne: Your new book argues that the history of the United States is best understood if we view it as a caste system – with many traits in common with other caste systems, most notably India and Nazi Germany. How do you define caste, and why do you think that it's a useful way of describing the divisions that have run through American society?

Isabel Wilkerson: I define caste as an arbitrary artificial hierarchy. In the American context, this hierarchy has meant that people's life chances and what they are permitted to do have been related to and dependent upon what they look like.

It's also important to say that I distinguish caste from race. While caste is a concept that's thousands of years old, race is fairly new in human history. It only really dates back to the era of the transatlantic slave trade, when it grew out of the desire to categorise people in order to build the 'New World'. When it came to trying to build this New World, there was an imperative to find a way of saying that one group was better than the other, and the most readily available way of distinguishing one entire group of people from another was skin colour. That was the beginning of the American caste system, in which race was the signal or cue that determined where people would fit into the hierarchy.

How did this caste system take root in North America?

When Europeans first colonised North America, there was a tremendous need for labour to tame the land. Africans were transported across the Atlantic specifically to do that work – building society and infrastructure, and fulfilling agricultural needs that would provide the commodities that the rest of the economy was built on. The Americas became a landing place for people who otherwise, throughout most of human history, never would have interacted or never have had to live in the same space. As such, it became an experiment in the confluence of humans from all over the world. There aren't many examples of large-scale democracies that have contained such a varied combination of multi-ethnic groups, all living together. And any newcomer had to find out where to pitch in.



Caste: The Origins of our Discontents
by Isabel Wilkerson
(Allen Lane, 496 pages, £20)

Back in Europe, no one would view themselves as 'white'. Instead you would interact with others on the basis of national identity – you were English, Portuguese or Dutch, for example. But once Europeans arrived in the New World, they discovered that they were assigned a place based upon what they looked like – the physical manifestation of their heredity. Back home, a Serbian may not have had much in common with, say, someone from France or Denmark, but in America they found that they were viewed as the exact same group. Since they were seen as the same racial category, they were all assigned to the same queue. It turned out that there was a place for everyone, and that place was assigned before they had even arrived.

And the same went for people coming from Africa and other parts of the world. They were not one people – they encompassed many different nations, groups and ethnicities, and didn't share a common language. That dislocation made them especially vulnerable to labelling, isolation and ultimately to the kind of brutality that they met when subjected to enslavement – and colonisers took advantage of that. It was a cruelly pragmatic move on their part to lump together this group of disparate peoples and designate them as all being at the very bottom of a still-emerging hierarchy.

By its very nature, that hierarchy put people in contention automatically. It forced people to choose sides in order to survive. While the first immigrants might have had to adjust to this new system, it quickly became solidified into received wisdom that was passed down the generations. Now the idea of someone being 'white' or 'black' is such an accepted delineation that we don't even think about it. We simply accept these things to be truisms – they seem so obvious to us. If you take a long view, however, people haven't thought about themselves in those terms – being black or white – for very long. But those labels are the prime tool for enforcing the US caste system, because they have meaning in the hierarchy created here 400 years ago.

You compare the United States to the caste systems of India and Nazi Germany. What similarities did you find?

That was one of the most fascinating aspects of this work, because while they used different means of delineating and identifying who would be where in the hierarchy, the methods and means of maintaining and enforcing the caste systems in India, Nazi Germany and the United States were actually shockingly similar.

I identify eight 'pillars of caste' that are consistent throughout all of these three hierarchies. These include a stated belief in the system being intended by divine will or the laws of nature, and the need to dehumanise those at the bottom in order to make people feel like this is the natural order of things. Another is spreading ideas about the purity of the dominant group, versus the pollution that will accrue from them being exposed to those who are viewed as subordinate. Divisions are reinforced by attempts to restrict or prohibit marriage between castes, and to control what jobs people do.

ALAMY

PROFILE

Isabel Wilkerson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author. Her previous book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (2010), was a *New York Times* non-fiction bestseller and won the National Book Critics Circle award for non-fiction. She has taught at Princeton, Emory and Boston universities

And those caste boundaries are enforced using terror and cruelty. I identified these characteristics throughout all three of the systems I looked at.

One of the comparisons you draw between Nazi Germany and America is the way that the language of science was weaponised to reinforce caste – how so?

Working on this book was a revelation on so many different levels. One of the things I was most shocked to uncover was the extent of the connections between eugenicists on both sides of the Atlantic. These were kindred spirits – they looked to each other for inspiration and encouraged one another. The impulse to maintain hierarchy led those who enforced it to look for justifications – and one of the key methods used to rationalise caste was by using so-called 'science'.

This began long before the Third Reich: during the late 19th century and through the First World War, pseudoscience was being used to build a justification for the hierarchy that had already been established but was still brewing. American eugenicists even went to Germany during the Third Reich to consult with the Nazis and were received as dignitaries. This was stunning to me.

One of the most obvious ways pseudoscience was used to reinforce caste was a fixation on water. In all three systems there was an obsession with keeping water separate and pure. In India, *Dalits* [those at the bottom of the caste system, sometimes known as 'untouchables'] couldn't go near a well without being abused by someone from the dominant caste, and the Nazis did not permit Jewish citizens to use swimming pools. While in Chicago in 1919, there was a case where an African-American boy got into trouble for making the mistake of wading off a beach into what was considered 'white water'. So the interconnectedness between these systems is clear.

As well as the similarities between the systems, there are differences. What's illuminating about those differences?

I think that what is most enlightening about the differences is actually how arbitrary they are. The fact that they all used different metrics to determine who was accorded the role of being dominant and who was accorded the role of being subordinate, makes those metrics completely arbitrary. This simply affirms the tragedy of caste itself.

How have caste boundaries been policed, maintained and enforced across history?

Since artificial hierarchy is by definition arbitrary, it goes against the will of people who do not wish to be constricted by its regulations and structures. Therefore, the need to surveil and police the behaviour of those deemed as being in the subordinate caste is an important part of any caste system.

In the US, policing the boundaries of caste can be traced back to the time of slavery, with the need to keep enslaved Africans in their place and prevent them from running away. Slave patrols were created to hunt them down if they sought to flee. Interestingly, a lot of those slave patrols were not operated by constables or officials, but manned by ordinary people from the dominant caste, who were expected to police and surveil those beneath them. Meanwhile, the Fugitive Slave Act [passed in 1850] meant that those in the north, where enslaved people might escape to, were required to return any runaways to the people that claimed to own them.

Indian activists carry portraits of the 20th-century social reformer Bhimrao Ambedkar, who campaigned against caste-based discrimination, and called for an end to India's caste system

This idea of controlling and containing those who were assigned to the bottom rung is a long thread that runs throughout American history. It might have happened without the word 'caste' ever being used, but it was nevertheless about maintaining boundaries and restricting who could do what and go where.

That follows through to the current era. Again, the word 'caste' may not be used, but nonetheless, videos surface every other week showing ordinary white Americans surveilling those assigned to the subordinate caste – African-Americans. There are so many examples that it's hard to choose from them.

But to take just one: in 2018 a graduate student of African descent, Lolade Siyonbola, was studying in her dorm common room at Yale. She was taking a break from writing a paper, napping and resting her head on a book, when another student, who was white, accused her of trespassing. The police were called and Siyonbola had to provide ID to prove she was a Yale student. The police even questioned the ID she presented to them.

That's just one example of an ordinary person policing the boundaries of who they expected to see in that environment – deciding who, in their mind, seemed like a legitimate, worthy student of Yale University. Of course, this is just one of many examples, the most extreme of which end in violence and brutality. Sometimes, people lose their lives as a result of the policing of these caste boundaries. This is the long thread of history reasserting itself.

You also share some of your own experiences of the US caste system. How have you seen it play out first-hand?

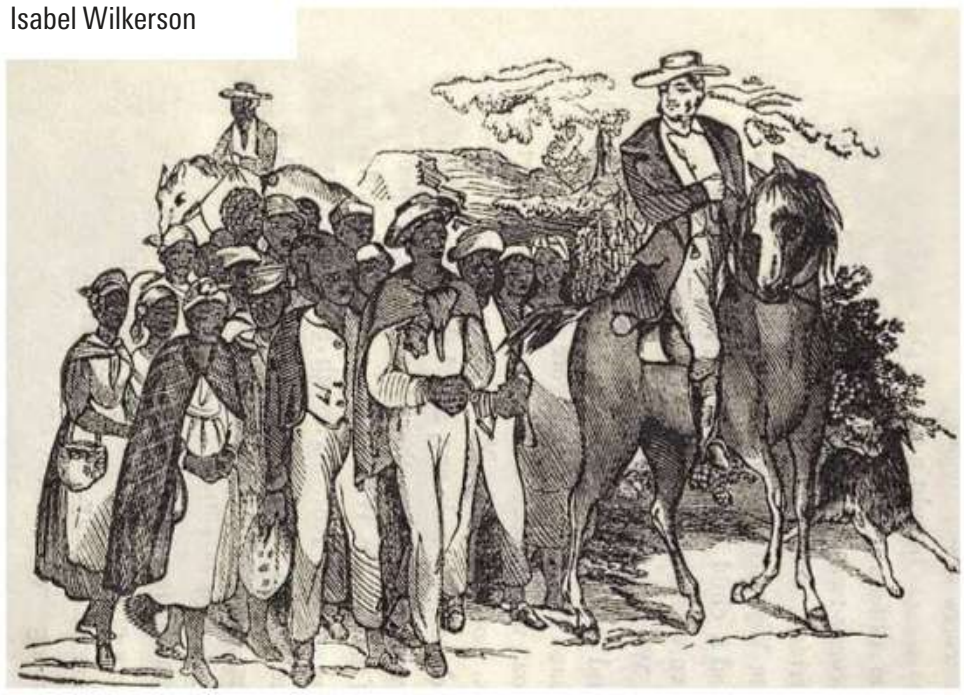
A few years back I was a national correspondent for *The New York Times*. I made an appointment to interview a man for a story that I was working on. I'd spoken to him on the phone beforehand and he was naturally very excited to be interviewed for such a renowned newspaper. I showed up at his establishment at the time we had agreed, and when I arrived there was no one else there other than one of his employees, who told me to wait for him.

The door opened and the man came rushing in, very harried. I introduced myself as Isabel from *The New York Times*, and he responded: "I don't have time to talk with you, I'm late for a very important interview." I told him that the appointment was with me, but it was as if he hadn't heard me. So I repeated that I was the person there to interview him – I was from *The New York Times*. And he said, "Well, how do I know that?" I responded that I'd arranged the

> **"The word 'caste' may not be used, but videos surface every other week showing white Americans surveilling those assigned to the subordinate caste: African-Americans"**

GETTY IMAGES

Policing the boundaries of caste is a "long thread throughout US history". In this photograph used to illustrate a 1901 song, an African-American man is pushed onto the street by a white shopkeeper



A slave trader drives a group of enslaved people to a market in the American South. "In the US, the origins of policing the boundaries of caste can be traced back to the time of slavery," argues Isabel Wilkerson

ALAMY/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

appointment with him on the phone and no one else was around. Then he asked if I had a business card to prove it. Against all evidence to the contrary, he was refusing to believe that I was the person who was there to interview him. I showed him my ID, but he said: "This doesn't mean anything because it doesn't have *The New York Time*s on it. I'm going to have to ask you to leave because I have to get ready for my appointment." So I left.

Obviously this affected me. It impacted my ability to do my work, but it also made me feel marginalised, erased and isolated. One thing that is often said about people who are marginalised is that they're "playing the race card" or "playing the gender card". But I would say that that is absolutely the last thing on anybody's mind. That situation didn't benefit me in any way. There were no winners in that scenario – in fact, everyone lost. The encounter even ended negatively for the man himself, because I wrote the story and he wasn't in it, meaning that he didn't get whatever publicity or attention he might have wished to have got from it.

I decided to share personal stories like that in the book to emphasise how caste affects everyone up and down the hierarchy. All kinds of people are harmed by it – not just those at the bottom. This is often in ways that people can't see, particularly if they don't have to engage with these issues on a daily basis. People may not even be aware of how it's affecting them.

It's just yet another example of how caste still operates as a quietly destructive force. It's like the wind. People can't see it, but it's there nonetheless. And it can knock you down in moments you never expected.

Do you think that the American caste system can or will ever be dismantled?

That is *the* question, isn't it? It would take a strong will. Firstly, there needs to be a recognition that it exists at all, which is the reason I wrote the book. That takes an open-hearted willingness to see the commonality of all human beings and to appreciate the price that we all pay for having a caste system. Those are the things that would have to happen before it could be dismantled.

Nazi Germany makes an interesting comparison because it was a short-lived yet horrifying object lesson in the worst that can happen as a result of hierarchy. But in the time since the terrifying 12 years of the Third Reich, Germany has been in the process of seeking to understand and come to grips with its past, and in many respects atone for those horrors. There's been a tremendous effort of maintaining the memory of what happened, while also honouring those who suffered. That is an ongoing effort on their part, and I think it offers lessons for everyone.

The great *Dalit* leader, Bhimrao Ambedkar, wrote about the need to demolish hierarchy back in the 1930s, in his seminal work *The Annihilation of Caste*. But here we still are almost a century later, despite legislation to the contrary. This history is long and deep, and there's no escaping it. These things will be with us until we reconcile with history. H

MORE FROM US

Listen to an extended version of this interview with Isabel Wilkerson on our podcast soon at **historyextra.com/podcast**

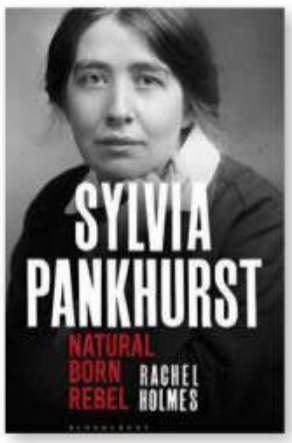
Tireless activist
Rachel Holmes' biography of Sylvia Pankhurst (seen here campaigning against the Italian war in Ethiopia) follows a life "filled with art, writing, talking and heckling"

EMPICS ARCHIVE

BIOGRAPHY

A life lived to the full

DIANE ATKINSON salutes an impressive new biography charting the action-packed life of Sylvia Pankhurst, from suffragette hunger strikes to secret missions to revolutionary Russia



Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel
by Rachel Holmes
Bloomsbury, 976 pages, £35

On 28 September 1960, Sylvia Pankhurst's funeral was held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, on the orders of her good friend Haile Selassie, emperor of Ethiopia. One of Britain's most notorious suffragettes was buried in state in the Kiddist Selassie Menbere Tsebaot Church Cemetery, reserved for Ethiopian patriots, the only non-Ethiopian to be honoured in this way (until her son was given the same treatment in 2017). It was a bizarre end for a lifelong republican atheist: chanting Orthodox bishops conducted the service; her coffin draped in gold cloth was buried by the Imperial Guard in full regalia, overseen by priests holding embroidered parasols. Haile Selassie, aged 68, stood to attention throughout the two-hour service.

Sylvia's long life was spent in feminist, socialist, communist, anti-colonialist and anti-racist political campaigning. She was friends with Haile Selassie from the 1930s and loudly condemned Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935–36, having been alerted to the rising Italian Fascism in the 1920s by her lover Erasmus Silvio Corio, an anarchist, political refugee and wanted man. When Sylvia met Selassie off the train at Waterloo station in 1936 to welcome him to Britain, she saw him as a victim of white colonialism and Fascism, a man who had fought alongside his troops in the trenches before seeking exile in Britain. She became a critical friend, making clear she supported him not because he was an emperor, but because she believed in his cause – the independence of Ethiopia. Some elements of Haile Selassie's legacy are contentious, and Sylvia's 25-year friendship with a man who was in many ways the antithesis of her life's work raises questions that Rachel Holmes explores in this new biography.

That dazzling day in the Ethiopian sun in 1960 was a very long way from where

Pankhurst's life had begun. She was born in sooty Manchester on 5 May 1882, to radical socialist and feminist parents. Her father, Richard, was a barrister, known as the 'Red Doctor' for both his gingery whiskers and his socialist politics. Her mother, Emmeline, and maternal grandmother were campaigners for women's suffrage; her maternal great-grandfather had witnessed the Peterloo Massacre in 1819. Sylvia and her siblings had politics and protest in their blood.

Almost every one of Sylvia's 78 years were filled with art, politics, writing, talking, heckling, campaigning, espousing the most radical causes of the day – all driven by her father's words: "If you do not work for other people you will not have been worth the upbringing." Of the three Pankhurst daughters (two sons died young), it was Sylvia who followed his words to the letter. In 1898, when Sylvia was 16, her beloved father died of a perforated ulcer in her presence, while her mother and elder sister Christabel were away. His death informed the rest of her life: she devoted it to fight for what he believed. She maintained an intimate relationship with her parents' close friend James Keir Hardie, the founder of the Labour party and the suffragettes' most loyal supporter in parliament, until he died in 1915.

Natural Born Rebel is an astonishing, comprehensive, personal and political cradle-to-grave biography that surely stands alone as the definitive volume on an extraordinary woman: a suffragette, activist and artist for whom sacrifice and suffering were second nature. It is hard to imagine anyone who would be able to match the depth and breadth of all-consuming sincerity and passionate personal conviction that Pankhurst threw at every cause she seized by the scruff of the neck. She pursued a relentlessly political life, collecting and campaigning for causes as other people collected stamps.

The book brims with many extraordinary scenes from key moments in 20th-century history, in which Pankhurst insisted on being a key player. A talented artist who studied at the Royal College of Art, she gave the suffragettes a coherent visual identity quite unlike any other political campaign. In her work for the militant Women's Social and Political Union, she designed exhibitions, banners and logos including the Holloway brooch, a medal awarded to all suffragettes who served time in prison for the cause. Pankhurst was herself arrested 15 times and served a dozen prison sentences for her protests. It was during these sentences that she refused sleep, water and food and was repeatedly force-fed, often twice a day, until she thought she was losing her body and mind.

Based in London's East End during the suffragette campaign, 'Our Sylvia' was a pacifist during the First World War, scorned by everyone besides her socialist and pacifist colleagues for her efforts to stop the war. She was followed by Special Branch and her passport was confiscated. But, helped by local working women and some well-heeled friends, Pankhurst opened cost-price restaurants serving cheap nutritious food, creches, baby clinics, and not one but two toy-making factories offering work to local women who had lost their jobs because of the war.

"It's hard to imagine anyone who could match the passionate personal conviction Pankhurst threw at every cause she seized by the scruff of the neck"

In 1916, she slipped out of England to witness the Easter Rising in Dublin. The following year she gave her wholehearted support to the Russian Revolution and called for the same in Britain. Pankhurst's hair-raising journey to the Moscow Congress of the Communist International in July 1920 to meet Lenin, and the aftermath of their tetchy encounter, was a significant moment. Heavily disguised, she stowed away on a freighter from Harwich to Sweden, where she boarded a tiny fishing boat for Murmansk. Suffering badly from seasickness and almost falling overboard in a squall, she went by train to the Kremlin for what would be a showdown with Lenin in the tsar's bedroom suite. The row was caused by their diametrically opposed views on how to bring about a communist revolution in Britain. Comrade Pankhurst wanted to abolish parliamentary democracy to achieve revolution; Lenin urged the British left to work within it to bring about its downfall. Refusing to toe the line, Sylvia was expelled from the British Communist Party in 1921.

Rachel Holmes mines previously unseen archive material, describing breathtaking scenes and the inner thoughts of key players. This epic study is a generous, vivid and telling slice of 20th-century world history, lived in and acted upon by one heroic woman. H

Diane Atkinson is the author of *Rise Up Women!: The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (Bloomsbury, 2018)

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Sarah LeFanu on authors in the Boer War

"Arthur Conan Doyle hadn't practised for ten years due to the success of his Sherlock Holmes books, but was so keen to get out to the Boer War that he signed up with a field hospital as a surgeon. The war was also an excuse for him to leave his personal problems behind – his wife had TB and he'd fallen in love with someone else. This often happens in wars – people go for their own personal reasons as much as higher ideals such as patriotism."

Jonathan Lichtenstein on retracing his father's Kindertransport journey

"I became aware of my father's experience in the Second World War when I was very young. He would make no mentions of Hitler, of Nazis, of the war at all, quite understandably. So we decided to go on a journey to retrace his childhood journey. I think my father was frightened by the idea initially – it was something he didn't need to engage with, because he had a good life in many ways. But I think that our journey was also a favour for me."

Alan Mikhail on the global influence of Sultan Selim I

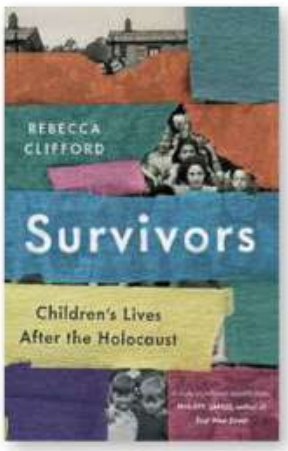
"Part of the reason that we have missed Sultan Selim I's story – and that of the Ottoman empire more generally – while thinking about the creation of the modern world is that we are invested in a narrative about the rise of Europe and the rise of America, and we have cut out Islam and its foremost representatives from that story."

MORE FROM US Listen to these episodes and more for free at **historyextra.com/podcast**

20TH CENTURY

Life after death

LAURENCE REES recommends a moving and often surprising examination of the difficulties faced by children rebuilding their lives after surviving the Holocaust



Survivors: Children's Lives After the Holocaust
by Rebecca Clifford
Yale University Press, 344 pages, £20

Rebecca Clifford has written a wonderful and important book. It's wonderful because she is a gifted historian who writes with immense clarity – and important because it corrects so many false perceptions about what it was like to survive the Holocaust as a Jewish child.

She reveals, for example, that it simply isn't necessarily the case that the most horrendous period of these children's lives was the years during the Second World War. In fact, for many children – protected and hidden by non-Jews – this was often a time when they felt secure. Even more counter-intuitive is the fact that, as Clifford says, in some instances it was possible that "daily life in a Nazi camp could be relatively stable for a small child".

In many cases, the biggest trauma for these children was their immediate postwar experience. The reappearance of a parent who had survived the Holocaust seldom brought instant happiness. Children had inevitably become fond of their wartime carers. Clifford gives one striking example of a girl who had been protected from the Nazis by a Polish Catholic family, and "become an anti-Semite", who was upset that her mother was Jewish. The parents themselves were frequently traumatised by their own wartime experiences and were therefore struggling to re-establish their lives. Some were jealous of the attachments their children had made to those who had looked after them.

The consequence of all this emotional upset was that large numbers of the children were subsequently placed in care homes by their own parents. Others, who had been living in care homes after the war, "wished in hindsight they could have stayed" once they had been handed back to their parents. It is no surprise that Clifford, as she writes, "initially found this shocking".

Beginning again Children eat rations of chocolate shortly after their liberation from Belsen concentration camp. Rebecca Clifford's new book charts the struggles faced by dislocated children after the war ended

> **"In many cases, the biggest trauma for children who survived the Holocaust was not the war years, but their immediate postwar experience"**

The majority of children also endured enormous physical dislocation after the end of the war, with most leaving Europe. Such children now had to settle not just in a new country but on a new continent, and therefore adjust not only to living in a new home but also to an entirely different culture and language.

Clifford is too nuanced a historian to believe in simplistic happy endings. At every stage in the book she points out the problems and challenges these children faced, and examines how some did – understandably – suffer lasting psychological damage. The incredible thing is that so many didn't, and proved resilient enough to press on and live relatively normal lives. In that sense, this book is a powerful example of the ability of human beings to survive at all costs.

Ultimately, then, Clifford's work asks profound questions about the human condition, perhaps most intriguingly, 'how can we make sense of our lives when we do not know where we come from?'. Since many of these children were too young to fully remember or understand what happened to them during the war, they were denied the 'privilege' of making sense of childhood memories.

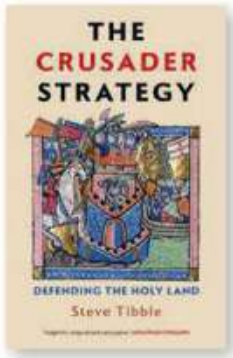
This is a book that lingers long in the mind, and I wish it the wide readership that it deserves. H

Laurence Rees is an author and broadcaster. His next book, *Hitler and Stalin: The Tyrants and the Second World War,* will be published by Viking in late October

SHUTTERSTOCK

MEDIEVAL

Kingdoms of god



The Crusader Strategy: Defending the Holy Land
by Steve Tibble
Yale, 376 pages, £25

The military history of the crusader states is currently a popular topic. Steve Tibble's second foray into the subject – following 2018's *The Crusader Armies: 1099-1187* – sits alongside several other recent books intended for the general reader. What sets this apart is that it seeks, by deconstructing these states' military strategies, to challenge modern preconceptions regarding the lack of intelligence (or mindless brutality) of medieval crusading leaders.

The book begins with the battle of the Springs of Cresson on 1 May 1187, when a small Templar and Hospitaller force was all but annihilated by a numerically superior Muslim army. This defeat paved the way for Saladin's famous victory at Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem a few months later, and Tibble traces how events in the crusader states, primarily Jerusalem, led to this conclusion. Tibble argues that this was not the inevitable result for states built by unthinking zealots, blindly hacking their way forward. Instead he argues that crusader settlers can be viewed as careful strategists, if not always tactically adept enough to succeed. In their staggered expansion towards Egypt, they balanced multiple aims and pressures (not least a lack of manpower) to ensure their surprising existence.

Engagingly written, albeit with an occasional over-reliance on readers' contextual knowledge, and an informal style that might raise some eyebrows (but which does help to remind the reader that these were real people, not mythical figures), this is an effective entry point for those interested in the grand politics of crusader states. It is this which leads to a cautionary note, however. It is my hope that no reader forgets that a historical picture painted largely in the broadbrush strokes of leaders' overarching military strategies can only ever offer a small glimpse of the past. The rich, complex, enigmatic, even troubling, history of the crusader states deserves to be better understood – and hopefully will be. H

Andrew D Buck, postdoctoral fellow at University College Dublin

ROYAL

Anatomy of a downfall

Richard III: A Failed King?
by Rosemary Horrox
Allen Lane, 128 pages, £14.99

This latest biography of Richard III opens with a startling rollcall of Ricardian failures: the shortest reign of a crowned king since the Norman conquest; the first and last king since Harold Godwinson to die in battle – and not killed defending his shores against invasion, but hacked to death by his own subjects. Considering this litany of catastrophes, Horrox's subtitle seems entirely apt. The question of whether Richard III failed is never in doubt, but *why* he failed is carefully deconstructed.

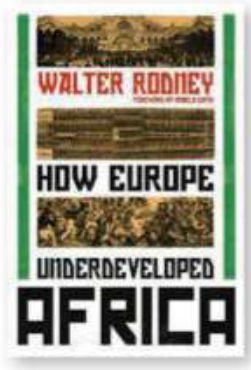
Given the debate around this most contentious monarch, a complex and contradictory man emerges in this zippy narrative. Richard may have been disillusioned with his brother Edward IV's lascivious court, but that didn't stop him revelling in the luxuries of kingship himself. Horrox is studiously even-handed, not least in regards to the disappearance of his nephews, the princes in the Tower. While Horrox acknowledges that Richard's responsibility for their deaths is "the most likely scenario", fitting the precedent of previous deposed kings, she emphasises Richard's good intentions towards governmental reform at his accession, and his attempt to maintain a Yorkist status quo: Edward IV's regime stripped of his "toxic" Woodville in-laws.

Horrox rightly emphasises how the past 30 years of usurpation had eroded people's faith in kingship, allowing Richard to imagine that he could depose a child-king without undue consequence. As history proved, he was wrong. Richard seems to have been genuinely shocked when his subjects took exception and rebelled against him. A misplaced eagerness to vindicate himself in battle proved his fatal flaw. When Henry Tudor's rebel army invaded, Richard ploughed headlong into his own obliteration. Horrox is clear that the cause of that self-destruction was, ultimately, Richard himself. H

Lauren Johnson, author of *Shadow King: The Life and Death of Henry VI* (Head of Zeus, 2019)

THE CLASSIC BOOK

Kehinde Andrews on a book that dismantled colonialist ideas about Africa



How Europe Underdeveloped Africa
by Walter Rodney
(first published 1972)

For anyone who genuinely wants to understand why black life continues to be devalued, and the global nature of the problem, Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) is a must-read. It's now 40 years since Rodney was assassinated in Guyana, where he had organised a political party in opposition to the dominant regime, but his work continues to be influential.

The book is a forensic account of the devastation caused to the continent by colonialism. Too often we imagine that, once the colonial period ended, there was a seamless transition into independent nations that could compete on the world stage. Rodney shows how Africa was purposefully underdeveloped, starting with the wreckage caused by transatlantic slavery. Europe and, later, the US then drained away Africa's significant mineral wealth, building only the infrastructure necessary to take resources out of the continent; as Rodney says in the book, "all roads led to the sea". The result was that, even when independence was declared, African nations were destined to remain locked in a colonial relationship to the west.

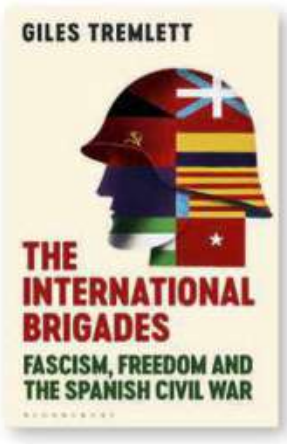
Continued poverty in Africa is not an accident. It is by design. The same logic that allows this exploitation to continue explains the racism still seen in the west. Rodney reminds us that racism is a fundamental part of the political economy, and that black life will continue to not matter until we address the root of the problem. H

Kehinde Andrews' latest book, *Back to Black: Black Radicalism for the 21st Century,* is out now in paperback (Zed Books)

SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Fighters against fascism

ALEJANDRO QUIROGA recommends a book that tells the stories of international soldiers who signed up to fight in the Spanish Civil War, and questions what motivated them



The International Brigades: Fascism, Freedom and the Spanish Civil War
by Giles Tremlett
Bloomsbury, 720 pages, £25

The International Brigades have occupied a central place in British historical memory for decades. The 35,000 men and women who travelled from all over the world to defend the democratic Second Spanish Republic have been the object of a vast literature, and remain a key part of the popular imagination of anti-fascism in inter-war Europe. Giles Tremlett's book provides a comprehensive narrative history of the Brigaders, while exploring the volunteers' role in Spain and beyond. A connoisseur of the Iberian past, Tremlett has authored a number of books on Spanish history while working for *The Guardian* in Madrid.

The International Brigades takes a chronological approach, and each of its 52 short chapters deals with a particular event of the Spanish Civil War and introduces a number of volunteers who take centre stage in the narrative. Their adventures and misadventures are intertwined with the development of domestic political struggles and international disputes caused by the conflict. The final chapter is particularly revealing, showing the anti-fascist activities that some International Brigaders went on to during Second World War and the very successful political careers they enjoyed on both sides of the Iron Curtain after 1945. The result is a lively, hugely readable, scholarly book, combining archival material with a wealth of secondary sources.

For decades, academics have debated the motivations, impact and legacy of the International Brigades. In Britain and the United States, a Cold War mentality still prevails which holds that the volunteers decided to go to Spain due to communist sympathies. Aside from the empirical limitations of this view – only around half of International Brigaders held communist affiliations – this argument does not fully explain why thousands of men and women from very different social classes and countries chose to risk their lives for the Republic. Tremlett suggests that anti-fascism was the only political and moral category almost all Brigaders fitted in to. Faced with the crucial binary choice between fascism and anti-fascism, the volunteers in Spain fought a battle for the future of their own countries – many of them already under rightwing authoritarian regimes.

In the case of Britain, the Cold War anti-communist narrative has remained popular for so long precisely because recognising the crucial anti-fascist component of their Brigaders underscored the tolerance and, at times, sympathies of the British government towards Hitler and Mussolini before the outbreak of the Second World War. In the UK, the volunteers recognised the threat of fascism well before the British government did. In fighting fascism, the International Brigaders challenged the appeasement policies of the British government, which included the military, economic and diplomatic suffocation of the Spanish democracy and the acceptance of Hitler's and Mussolini's interventions in the war. Appeasement also meant that the Brigaders faced a hostile response from the British government when they returned home.

Tremlett is right to point out that the International Brigades "deserve to be remembered not just by those who sympathise with their mostly leftist politics, but by anyone who believes western democracies were right to fight fascism in the Second World War". H

Alejandro Quiroga is a historian based at Universidad Complutense de Madrid

"In fighting fascism in Spain, International Brigaders challenged the appeasement policies of the British government"

GETTY IMAGES

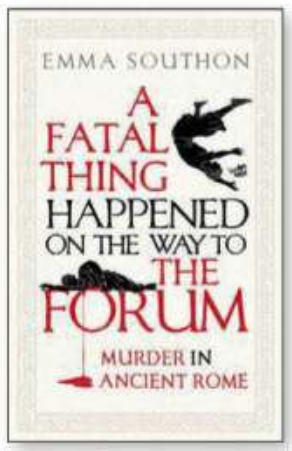
Answering the call
A 1937 Republican propaganda poster shows International Brigaders from Russia and Germany in front of the figure of freedom

Stabbed in the back
The assassination of Julius Caesar is one of the stories contextualised in a new book on Roman murder

ROMAN

Murder most foul

MICHAEL SCOTT considers a grisly new title that contains a blood-soaked collection of Roman murder tales



A Fatal Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum: Murder in Ancient Rome
by Emma Southon
Oneworld, 352 pages, £16.99

As Emma Southon points out, we all love a good murder story – and this book is full of poisonings, bludgeonings and beheadings from ancient Rome. Murder, as she says in her conclusion, allows us not only to see the "underbelly" of Rome, away from its shiny buildings, but also "how alike and unlike us" the Romans were.

The prologue sets out three deaths to frame the Roman story: the murder of Remus by Romulus, the suicide of Lucretia at the onset of the Republic, and the murder of Julius Caesar. The following chapters group types of murders together, so you can dip into the kind that takes your fancy: murder on the senate floor, in the family or in marriage, murders involving slavery, in the imperial house, or of an emperor. By far my favourite chapter was 'Murder by Magic', which, as you might guess, has a nice 'whodunnit' feel to it – often missing in the other chapters since the Romans were more upfront about the whole murder thing. On my wishlist would have been a chapter about murder in war (was there such a thing?) and one tackling gladiatorial combat head-on (since it feels strangely missing).

Southon brings some great and little-known murder stories to light, revelling in the bizarre and the macabre. She also offers some good context for the more well-known episodes, for instance by putting Julius Caesar's murder into the story of Republican killing, from that of politician Tiberius Gracchus in the second-century BC onwards.

A couple of points jar, however. Firstly, is this book about *death* (as the prologue list might indicate) or *murder*? While Southon points out the mutating definition of murder across modern communities, she chooses a catch-all definition "to include basically all killing", which feels a bit fast and loose.

The second is the slippery use of phrases such as 'us', 'the 'western world' and 'western readers' at points throughout the book. I think most people would push back against this as a helpful grouping, and, perhaps more worryingly, a grouping that Southon has in mind as her main audience. One hopes that she is aiming for a much wider and more varied readership than that – the material definitely deserves it. H

Michael Scott is a broadcaster and professor of classics and ancient history at the University of Warwick. His website is *michaelscottweb.com*

ALAMY/PAUL WOLFGANG WEBSTER

FROM FACT TO FICTION

Enemies within

Ian McGuire on his new thriller about a Fenian plot, *The Abstainer*

Your new book is set in Manchester in 1867. What tensions were simmering in the city at that time?
In 1867, police sergeant Charles Brett was shot when the prison van he was guarding was ambushed by a gang of armed men. Two of the prisoners inside the van were leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood, a secret organisation which had attempted a rebellion in Ireland six months earlier. The killing sparked widespread anger and fear. There was a sense, among some, that the city's large Irish community now represented an enemy within, and there were rumours of plans to blow up the Manchester gasworks and even to kidnap or assassinate the Queen as she travelled south from Balmoral. That fevered atmosphere is the context of the novel.

What was the Fenians' background?
'Fenians' is a collective term for members of two secret societies both formed in the late 1850s: the Irish Republican Brotherhood (based in Ireland) and the Fenian Brotherhood (based in the US). Their main aim was to provoke a violent revolution that would overthrow British rule in Ireland. They were largely unsuccessful, but their failures took on a heroic quality and became part of the mythology of Irish nationalism.

Is your story inspired by real events?
The novel begins with the public hanging of three Fenians, William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien, for the murder of Charles Brett. That hanging is a matter of historical fact, but the novel then goes on to imagine various after-effects, which although plausible (I hope) didn't actually occur. The novel's main character, James O'Connor, is a Dublin policeman who has been brought to Manchester to help deal with the Fenian threat – a number of Irish policemen were brought across to Manchester for that purpose, and I have drawn on records of what they did and thought.

The Abstainer
by Ian McGuire
(Scribner UK, 368 pages, £14.99)

History
Extra
Podcast

Best Specialist Podcast

THE PUBLISHER PODCAST AWARDS
POWERED BY dax

Voices of the past

The award-winning HistoryExtra podcast, from *BBC History Magazine*, is released up to five times a week. It features interviews with world-leading experts on topics spanning ancient history through to the world wars and beyond. Why not check it out today, and explore our archive of more than 700 previous episodes.

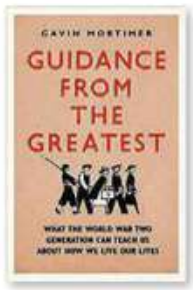
Download episodes **for free** from iTunes and other providers, or via **historyextra.com/podcast**

ALSO ON THE BOOKSHELF

WORDS BY **ELLIE CAWTHORNE** AND **MATT ELTON**

WWII

Guidance from the Greatest
by Gavin Mortimer
(Constable, 208 pages, £14.99)



Keep calm and carry on

In uncertain times like these, is there any comfort to be had from looking back on past crises? Gavin Mortimer thinks so. He draws on more than 200 interviews with those who lived through the Second World War to identify 12 qualities of 'the greatest generation' – courage, stoicism, selflessness – that still inspire today. It's the worldviews of wartime greats like Dame Vera Lynn distilled into a self-help book.

FICTION

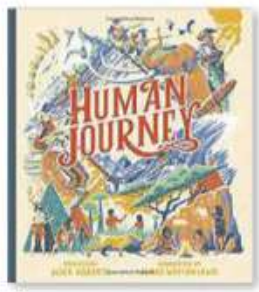
The Silver Collar
by Antonia Hodgson
(Hodder & Stoughton, 336 pages, £14.99)

Seedy underworld

The fourth instalment in Hodgson's Thomas Hawkins thriller series throws readers right back into the grimy, stinking streets of 18th-century London. Unsurprisingly, the happy ending Thomas has built for himself with illicit bookshop owner Kitty Sparks is short-lived, and before long he is drawn back into the ugly underbelly of city life when a skirmish with a street gang leaves him with a mystery on his hands.

CHILDREN'S

Human Journey
by Alice Roberts, illustrated by James Weston Lewis
(Egmont Books, 47 pages, £12.99)

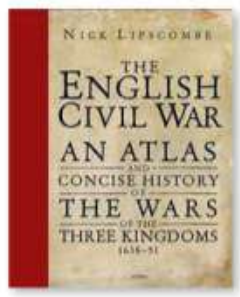


Emergence of man

Opening with the dawn of humankind, this evocatively illustrated book takes young readers on a voyage through the early development of Homo sapiens, spanning the migration out of Africa, the freezing tundras of the Ice Age, intrepid ocean voyages, early cave art, and the very first farmers. The anthropologist and TV presenter Alice Roberts acts as a steady-handed guide for readers aged 7+.

MILITARY

The English Civil War
by Nick Lipscombe
(Osprey, 368 pages, £50)

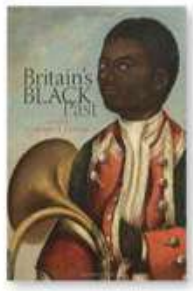


Riven by war

Jam-packed with more than 150 detailed maps, this "atlas and concise history" tells the story of the deadliest conflict ever fought in Britain and Ireland. In-depth appendixes and diagrams of battlefields, fortresses and nationwide troop movements offer a valuable perspective for anyone looking for a deep dive into the military strategy and progress of the opposing armies from 1638 to 1651.

SOCIAL

Britain's Black Past
edited by Gretchen H Gerzina
(Liverpool UP, 304 pages, £24.95)



Stories from black Britain

With its genesis in a 2016 BBC Radio 4 series of the same name, this edited collection assembles a diverse cast of academics, authors and curators to explore the experiences of black people throughout Britain's past. From those who escaped slavery to men embarking on a career at sea, it's a welcome, timely look at a history that stretches back many hundreds of years.

CULTURAL

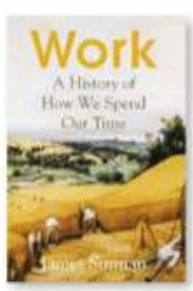
The Human Cosmos: A Secret History of the Stars
by Jo Marchant
(Canongate, 368 pages, £16.99)

Looking to the heavens

We now rely on science to make sense of the universe, but how did our forebears understand their place in the vastness of space? That's the question behind this book's 12 vignettes, which are populated by gods and tombs, explorers and astronauts. As befits its subject, this is a very human account (it gets a little trippy at its fringes) that illuminates the links between belief systems around the globe.

SOCIAL

Work: A History of How We Spend Our Time
by James Suzman
(Bloomsbury, 464 pages, £25)

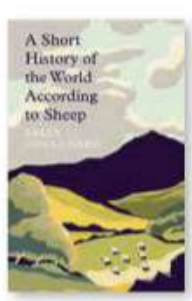


Employment history

The issue of achieving a good work-life balance – already a tricky proposition – became even more pressing during this year's lockdown, as the boundaries between the two blurred more than ever. It's a good time, then, for this detailed look at historical notions of 'work' and 'leisure' and how changes in technology and employment altered the ways in which people carried out their everyday lives.

CULTURAL

A Short History of the World According to Sheep
by Sally Coulthard
(Apollo, 320 pages, £16.99)



Of lives and livestock

Not nearly as wacky as its title might make you suspect, this is an in-depth, accessible take on how sheep have shaped human history. The fact that they are the source of so many useful resources – meat, wool, milk, even blood – means that cultures have often kept them close at hand. Global in scope, with fascinating vignettes from the ancient world to the present day, this is anything but woolly. H

Great Romantic
Caspar David Friedrich's 1822 painting *Moonrise over the Sea*. The artist features in Simon Schama's new series exploring the influence of Romanticism on the 21st century

ALAMY

ENCOUNTERS

72 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VISIT
By **Jonathan Wright** and **Matt Elton**
75 INTERVIEW: ROBERT RINDER

WATCH

Inventing the world

According to Simon Schama, the roots of our modern world lie not in the past few decades, but in the late 18th and early 19th century – the years following the start of the French Revolution in 1789. This was a time when Romanticism flourished, with its emphasis on the individual and of the emotions over the intellect. We still think as the Romantics did, he argues, and perceive the world through their eyes and ears.

It's an idea the historian explores over three episodes in a superb new TV series that ranges across the arts, so that Schama offers his learned take on visual artists including Caspar David Friedrich (whose 1822 painting *Moonrise over the Sea* is seen here), as well as the music of Frédéric Chopin and Robert Schumann and the poetry of William Wordsworth.

From the opening episode, which sees Schama walking – pre-coronavirus – amid the crowds in a political demonstration, the emphasis is on the Romantics as figures who were deeply involved with – and changed – the wider world. Percy Shelley was a radical and, in a religious age, an atheist. Mary Wollstonecraft's writing still informs feminism today.

And when the Romantics did look inwards,they also shaped our world, as Thomas De Quincey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's drug-influenced voyages into the subconscious attest.

Simon Schama:
The Romantics and Us
BBC Two / Expected to air in September

Fern Riddell's podcast returns for a second series, exploring less familiar episodes from the past

LISTEN

Rarely told tales

If it sometimes seems as if every scrap of the past has been endlessly picked over, cultural historian Fern Riddell begs to differ. The second series of her podcast, *Not What You Thought You Knew*, offers up the kinds of stories and characters that, while familiar to specialists, have yet to find a wider audience.

Subjects this time around include Emma Clarke, reckoned to be the first female black footballer. Born in 1876, she played for Mrs Graham's XI, said to be the first British women's football team. Riddell also looks back at the Sacred Band of Thebes, a troop of select soldiers in ancient Greece that consisted of 150 pairs of male lovers.

Not What You Thought You Knew

Sky History podcast / Available from Tuesday 15 September

A ninth-century depiction of the goddess Chamunda dancing on a corpse. A new exhibition explores the influence of belief in such deities

VISIT

Faith and feminism

Exhibitions have, for obvious reasons, been absent from these pages in recent issues, but – with the caveat that the situation remains unpredictable – museums around the UK are now starting to reopen to the public.

One of the major new offerings comes from the British Museum, whose Tantra exhibition explores a system of faith that spread outward from medieval India to inspire religion, culture, sexuality and politics around the world – including feminist thought. As is the case with many museums nowadays, it's essential to book tickets in advance.

Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution

British Museum, London / 24 September – 24 January 2021 / *britishmuseum.org*

Mary Quant, pictured selecting fabric for a new design. Her bold garments are the subject of a major exhibition set to open in Dundee

VISIT

Fashion forward

There's another chance to explore the life and work of pioneering fashion designer Mary Quant as the V&A's retrospective reaches its Dundee branch. Originally slated to open in Scotland back in April, it's currently set to run until early next year, and is a fascinating look at one of British fashion's most influential names.

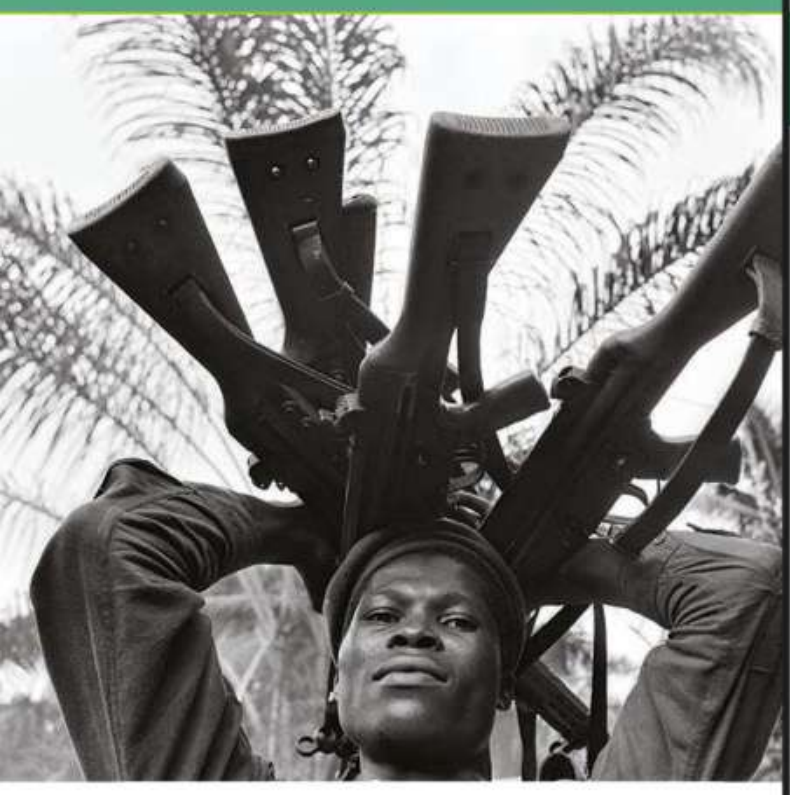
Quant launched her shop, Bazaar, on King's Road in London in 1955 – the year after Second World War rationing came to an end. From there, she went on to challenge postwar dreariness via a series of radical yet wearable pieces including the miniskirt, which she helped popularise.

Featuring scores of such garments, the V&A exhibition highlights the ways in which Quant challenged the gender norms of 1950s and 60s Britain, and offered women stylistic opportunities unavailable to previous generations.

Mary Quant

V&A Dundee / Open until 17 January 2021 / *vam.ac.uk/dundee*

FRAN MONKS/THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM/V&A



A Biafran soldier pictured in 1968. The civil war that engulfed Nigeria from 1967–70 is the setting for the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, newly adapted for radio

LISTEN

Life during wartime

The Biafran War (1967–70) was a brutal conflict fought between the Nigerian government and secessionists in the south of the country. The war resulted in 100,000 military casualties, and led to mass starvation. In 1968, the world looked on in horror at images of malnourished children, just a few of those affected by a famine that may have claimed the lives of millions.

It's an era brought vividly to life in Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2006 novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Newly dramatised by Janice Okoh as a two-part radio drama, it charts how the civil war affects the interlinked lives of a quintet of characters.

Sisters Olanna and Kainene are the daughters of a tribal chief turned businessman, part of the Igbo elite at the pinnacle of Biafran society. We also meet Olanna's lover Odenigbo, a revolutionary university professor; Ugwu, who works as Odenigbo's houseboy; and British writer Richard, who's in love with Kainene.

Listen out, too, for Radio 4 adaptations of work by Igbo-Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (from Monday 7 September) is set in the late 19th century, and shows a society threatened by the arrival of European outsiders through the eyes of a farmer, Okonkwo. *No Longer at Ease* (from Monday 14 September) follows civil servant Obi, Okonkwo's grandson.

Half of a Yellow Sun
BBC Radio 4 / Expected to air Sunday 6 September

GETTY IMAGES

HISTORY ON THE BOX

"So many people knew their parents had gone through the Holocaust and grew up with this shadow of trauma"

Barrister and TV presenter **ROBERT RINDER** tells us about his two-part documentary dealing with the legacy of the Holocaust and its impact on his family – and why it's vital to talk about the trauma

How did *My Family, the Holocaust and Me* come about?
It grew out of *Who Do You Think You Are?* [in a 2018 episode of the BBC genealogy series, production company Wall to Wall researched the stories of Rinder's relatives lost in the Holocaust], and the extraordinary response it generated. I was probably the least famous person to appear in that series, but it attracted a wave of viewers. One good news story is that there wasn't a peep of anti-Semitism on social media – just an outpouring of conversation, curiosity and a desire to know more.

How did you attempt to reconcile yourself with the trauma your relatives went through at the Treblinka extermination camp?
Doing *Who Do You Think You Are?* breathed life into the story of this family who had been murdered in Treblinka, but there was still a sense of a lack of completion. Although I think there's no such thing, in this historical context, as closure, it seemed important to be able to go to Treblinka and say Kaddish, the Jewish memorial prayer. That somehow mattered: to give the dead an element of honour, burial and memory, and being able to do something for them to restore their humanity. That was one of the most profound moments.

Drawing on your family's own experiences, how do you respond to psychologist Bernie Graham's idea of being born into "a state of bereavement"?
I remember my mum describing growing up around people who weren't there anymore; there was a sense that things could be taken away. There are so many people who knew that their parents had gone through the Holocaust and grew up with this dark shadow of trauma. That inevitably informed their parenting and coloured their childhood, but they knew nothing because it was too big and too difficult a subject to talk about.

Is there a sense that this kind of research can be a way of passing on not just information but – and this seems an awkward way of putting it – better mental health?
That's a good way of putting what is a really, really important question – the answer to which is 'yes'. What it does is enable a conversation, and it's that conversation that allows some people to say, "Aha, now I understand why certain things affect me. Now I understand why my parents acted in a certain way." It gives you, perhaps, a greater level of understanding, which I think imbues you with the capacity to think about yourself and to forgive them – and to restore their humanity as well. H

The new two-part series **My Family, the Holocaust and Me** is set to air on BBC One in September

A memorial at Treblinka, where several members of Robert Rinder's family were murdered

US vocal group The Temptations, c1968. A new series explores their role in the rise of soul music and how the genre reflected political concerns

WATCH

Sweet sounds

Soul music, rooted both in the Saturday night revelry of R&B and the Sunday-morning-after reflectiveness of gospel, offered a vision of black America that was assertive and confident. It also gave the world superstars such as Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye.

The story of how this happened is told in a new three-part BBC documentary. The series begins with 'Amazing Grace', which focuses on the era in which gospel and R&B collided, a phenomenon you can hear in the Ray Charles classic 'What'd I Say'. The second episode, 'Say It Loud', covers the tumultuous years of the late 1960s, which gave us the tougher, politically engaged soul of James Brown and The Temptations. Finally, 'Sweet Love' takes the story through to the 1980s, via Barry White's loverman soul and the Philadelphia International Records label.

Soul America

BBC Four / Expected to air Friday 4 September

WEEKLY TV & RADIO

Visit *historyextra.com* for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes

VISIT

Young master

Dutch painter and printmaker Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–69) had a long and diverse career, embracing multiple media and exploring subjects from the divine and allegorical to more earth-bound portraits and landscapes. An exhibition at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum focuses on the artist's formative years, a decade-long period from the mid-1620s that saw his talent, and his fame, develop exponentially.

That development is apparent through the selection of 30 paintings and 90 drawings and prints. Unusually, some of the works here capture missteps and mistakes – but, arguably, they were all in the service of becoming a master artist. Some themes recur (his portraits of older people are striking), while a series of self-portraits capture how Rembrandt changed across the course of a remarkable decade.

Young Rembrandt

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford / Open until 1 November / *ashmolean.org/youngrembrandt*

***Rembrandt Laughing*, the artist's c1628 self-portrait, is among the works featured in an exhibition exploring his formative years**

BAYERISCHE, STAATSGEMÄLDESAMMLUNGEN, ALTEPINAKOTHEK, MUNICH/GETTY

VISIT

Dress code

The kimono of a young woman, likely from early 19th-century Kyoto. These garments take centre stage in a new exhibition

Although the kimono may no longer be everyday clothing for most people in Japan, it's still an instantly recognisable symbol of the nation's culture. Its varying styles offer a wealth of clues about the wearer's age and marital status, as well as the type of occasion to which it's worn.

A new exhibition at the V&A charts the evolution of the garment's manufacture and use from the 17th century onward, illustrated with ornate examples and artistic representations. The ways in which the kimono was adopted outside of Japan, including by such cultural figures as Björk and Freddie Mercury, are also explored.

Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk
V&A London / Open until 25 October / *vam.ac.uk*

WATCH

Gathering storm

Because of Covid-19, new film releases debuting on the big screen have been in short supply. A new British thriller, *Six Minutes to Midnight*, offers cautious grounds for hope that this may be changing. Directed by Andy Goddard, whose previous work includes *Downton Abbey*, it stars Eddie Izzard, who also co-wrote the script. Based on a true story, the narrative focuses on a finishing school, the Augusta-Victoria College in Bexhill-on-Sea, on the south coast of England in 1939.

For all that war with Germany seems dangerously close, its pupils include the children of top Nazis. Teacher Thomas Miller (Izzard) finds this suspicious. Pretty soon, he is on the run, suspected of murder. The cast also includes Jim Broadbent and, as the school headmistress Miss Rocholl, Judi Dench. H

Six Minutes to Midnight
In cinemas this autumn

Judi Dench features alongside Eddie Izzard and Jim Broadbent in new film *Six Minutes to Midnight*, a drama exploring sinister goings-on in a school on England's south coast in 1939

JOSHIBI ART MUSEUM/IFC FILMS

Castles TO VISIT

With so much history to choose from, get inspiration for your next trip and discover these classic castles.

Hever Castle & Gardens

Experience over 700 years of history at the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. The splendid rooms contain an important collection of Tudor paintings and two prayer books inscribed by Anne Boleyn. Set in 125 acres of glorious grounds, autumn is the season when Hever's striking trees come to the fore.

hevercastle.co.uk // info@hevercastle.co.uk

Castle Rushen

At the heart of the Isle of Man's ancient capital, Castletown, stands Castle Rushen. One of the best preserved medieval castles in the British Isles, the fortress was once home to the Kings and Lords of Mann. Explore the castle's furnished chambers, and discover over 800 years of stories hidden within its walls.

manxnationalheritage.im // enquiries@mnh.gov.im

Inveraray Castle and Gardens

Experience the elegance and grandeur of Inveraray Castle and Gardens, on the shores of Loch Fyne. The castle was the home of the Duke of Argyll since the 1700s, and the seat of the Clan Campbell. Enjoy original Adams' ceilings, tapestries and antique furniture along with a vast array of arms, armoury and artefacts. Call 01499 302 203 for information.

Inveraray-castle.com // enquiries@inveraray-castle.com

Picton Castle

Set in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and surrounded by a spectacular 40 acre garden, Picton Castle originated in the 13th century, with a splendid Georgian wing added in the 1790s. A treasured family home for over 700 years, the elegant rooms feature opulent French furnishings, magnificent fireplaces and fine works of art.

pictoncastle.co.uk // 01437 751326

Chirk Castle

Construction of Chirk Castle began in the late 13th century, during the reign of Edward I, as part of his ring of fortifications in North Wales. The home of the Myddelton family since 1595, visitors can explore dank dungeons, lavish interiors, award-winning gardens and over 480 acres of landscaped parkland. Visit the Chirk Castle Facebook page to stay up to date.

nationaltrust.org.uk/chirk-castle // 01691 777 701

Belvoir Castle

One of the finest surviving examples of Regency architecture in the world, Belvoir Castle stands proud above Leicestershire's stunning Vale of Belvoir. A 19th Century castle, it's full of interesting artefacts and treasures collected by the Dukes of Rutland over the centuries. It's far from ordinary.

belvoircastle.com // 01476 871001

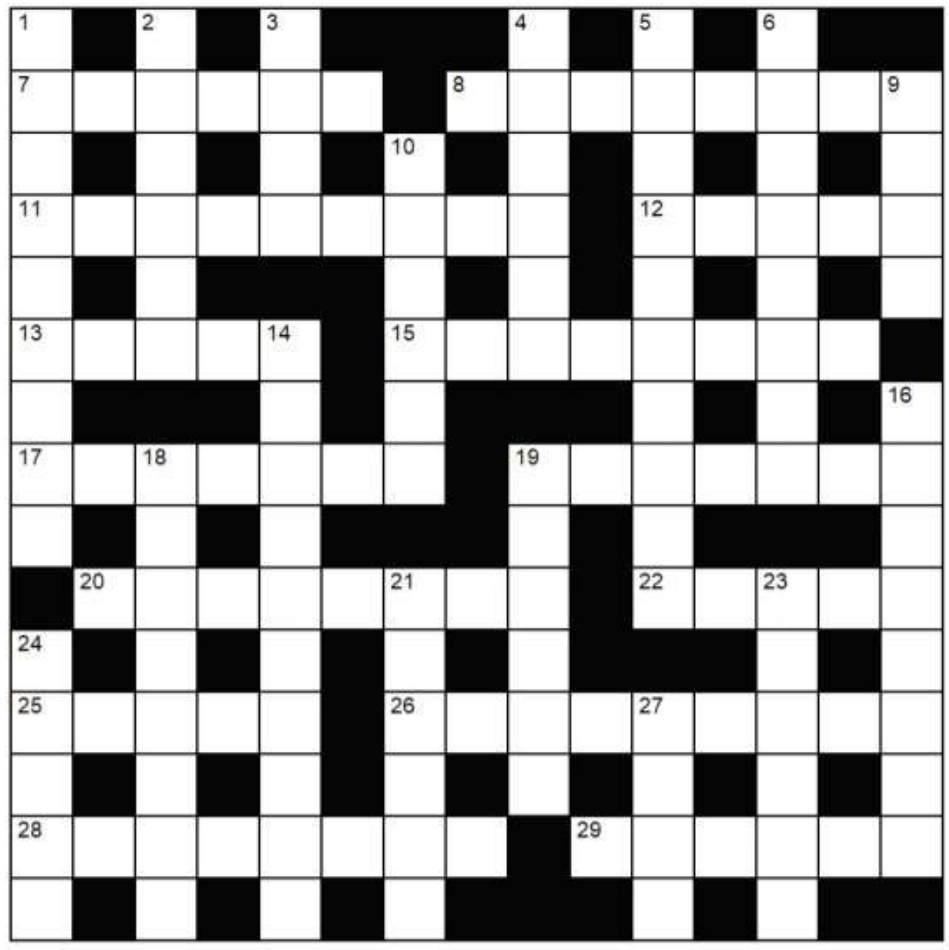
PRIZE CROSSWORD

Book worth £20 for 5 winners

A History of Magic, Witchcraft and the Occult

Foreword by Suzannah Lipscomb

From divination, voodoo and alchemy to Ouija and Wicca, this richly illustrated volume, published by DK, explores the extraordinary history of magical beliefs across the globe, from ancient times until the present day.



Across

7 Hampshire location, about halfway between Windsor and Winchester, of a castle built by King John (6)

8 One of the subterranean burial places of ancient Rome (8)

11/12 US-born French entertainment star, whose work with the Red Cross and the Resistance earned her the Croix de Guerre and Légion d'honneur (9,5)

13 Open land used for grazing, often the cause of 'wars' in America's Wild West (5)

15 The ____Massacre, occurred in Manchester on 16 August 1819, when a militia attacked a crowd of working-class protesters who were campaigning for political reform (8)

17 Term for an escape route used by Nazis and other fascists fleeing Europe after the Second World War (7)

19 The only diesel-electric British submarine to serve in the Falklands conflict, being ideal for close inshore operations (3,4)

20 Many of Sweden's social welfare laws were passed during his long tenure as prime minister in the mid-20th century (8)

22 During his reign from the mid-16th century, he extended Mughal power across the Indian subcontinent (5)

25 This river became an effective border of the Roman empire, following its army's heavy defeat in the Teutoburg forest in AD 9 (5)

26 Alan ____, war correspondent, author of popular histories such as *The African Trilogy* (1944) (9)

28 His 1963 report, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, led to the axing of many unprofitable lines and stations (8)

29 Material traditionally used to adorn the robes of members of the House of Lords (6)

Down

1 Members of the clergy who refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary after the Glorious Revolution (9)

2 Last name of a British prime minister and of a US president (6)

3 Family name of the subject of an exaggerated biography (1931) that helped establish him as a legendary 'Frontier Marshal' (4)

4 A unit of weight used by ancient Hebrews, Greeks and Romans (6)

5 A nickname, referring to his beard colour, of Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor (10)

6 The siege of this Virginian town by the Americans and French in 1781 resulted in a decisive victory against the British (8)

9 László ____, the Hungarian inventor of the writing instrument that is named after him (4)

10 French port which, under German occupation, was the scene of a disastrous raid by the Allies in August 1942 (6)

14 English monarch, who, despite having been declared an illegitimate child, ruled for almost 45 years (9,1)

16 Portmanteau term for two famous universities, thought to have been introduced by Thackeray around 1850 (8)

18 The Salem witch trials were "heard and determined" in a Court of Oyer and ____, specially set up in 1692 (8)

19 The first known depiction of this soil-breaking tool is in the Bayeux Tapestry (6)

21 Phrase used to describe how one country's fall to communism could precipitate the fall of its neighbours: the ____Effect (or Theory) (6)

23 Term, first used by the founder of a think tank in 2012, often applied specifically to the result of a national vote in 2016 (6)

24 Caribbean island, settled by Arawak Indians, claimed by Spain and taken by the Dutch, that gained autonomy in 1986 (5)

27 Alternative name for Ireland, which is believed to be taken from the Irish word for a goddess (4)

Who refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary? *(see 1 down)*

.....

Compiled by **Eddie James**

HOW TO ENTER

● Open to residents of the UK (& Channel Islands). Post entries to ***BBC History Magazine*, October 2020 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to ***october2020@historycomps.co.uk*** by 5pm on **30 September 2020**. ● Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the December 2020 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/* ● Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. ● Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ❑ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy. – bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidance/code-of-conduct*

Solution to our August 2020 crossword

Across 8 Darwin 9 Mata Hari 11/6 The Sailor King 12 Book of Kells 15 Pitcairn 17 Alamgir 19 Amerigo 20 Monarch 22 Ligny 24 Homo sapiens 25/13 Eva Peron 26 Lancelot 27 Levant

Down 1 Edith Piaf 2 Cree 3 Gibbon 4 Dacoit 5 Jack Cade 7 Lissa 10 Cooper 14 Rearmament 16 Tory Party 18 Gangster 19 Ashley 21 Repton 22 Lister 23 Thule 25 Eyam

Four winners of *Treasures of World History*

A Cleminson, Feltham; J Tarelli, South Lanarkshire; D Binsted, Kent; K Ward, Leicestershire

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

● The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (& Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person. ● The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/* ● The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up. ● Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions, or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England.

GETTY IMAGES

BBC

DISCOVER HISTORY

FROM THE MAKERS OF *BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE*

The Story of the Elizabethans

This in-depth special edition looks at how the era of exploration, entertainment and empire had a darker side, where poverty, violence and persecution plagued the lives of ordinary people. Discover:

- Fresh perspectives on Elizabeth I and her court
- The daily lives of ordinary people
- A new era of public entertainment
- An age of exploration and adventure

PLUS – subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK postage on this special edition

ONLY £9.99 INCLUDING FREE P&P*

Find out what life was like for **ordinary Elizabethans**

Uncover the secrets of Elizabeth I's **complicated love life**

Discover the **bloody persecution** of England's Catholics

Order online **www.buysubscriptions.com/Elizabethans19**
or call us on **03330 162 138**+ and quote THE STORY OF THE ELIZABETHANS 2019

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon to Fri 8am – 6pm and Sat 9am – 1pm.
* Subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £11.49 for all non-subscribers, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for the Rest of World. All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

MORE FROM US

A selection of the exciting content on our website **historyextra.com**

Everything you ever wanted to know about ancient Greece, but were afraid to ask

On this two-part podcast, Paul Cartledge responds to listener queries and popular search enquiries about one of the most renowned and influential ancient civilisations.
historyextra.com/ancient-greece-pod

The Spanish flu mask backlash

At the height of the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918–19, many Americans refused to wear face masks designed to reduce the spread of the illness. But why? Professor E Thomas Ewing investigates.
historyextra.com/spanish-flu-masks

Quickfire questions on medieval queens

Were medieval queens able to exercise real power and engage in court politics? Why is Eleanor of Aquitaine so remarkable? Dr Elena Woodacre, a historian at the University of Winchester, answers some of your questions about medieval queens.
historyextra.com/medieval-queens

How did the Nazi party rise to power?

In an interview with the HistoryExtra podcast, Richard J Evans, a leading expert on Nazi Germany, explains why Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party were able to cement control over Germany in 1933.
historyextra.com/nazi-germany-rise

DREAMSTIME/GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

NEXT MONTH

November issue on sale 1 October 2020

Medieval genius

Seb Falk explores scientific knowledge in the Middle Ages, showing how this was far from an era of ignorance

Lessons of old

Neil Oliver on what he thinks modern societies could learn from the ancient world

Belgian refugees

Alison Fell tells the stories of the thousands of Belgians who fled to Britain during the First World War

The 300

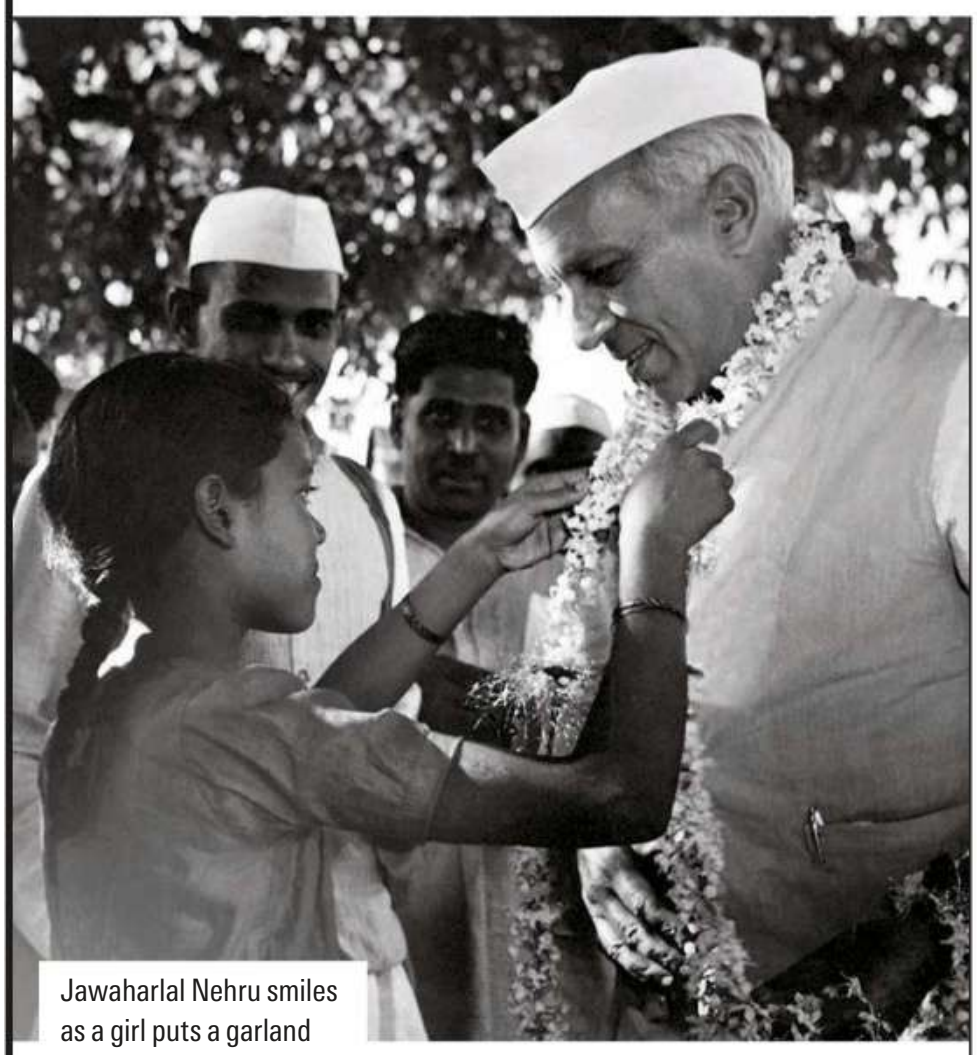
Andrew Bayliss revisits one of the most dramatic battles of ancient history: Thermopylae

MY HISTORY HERO

Fergal Keane, BBC special correspondent, chooses

Jawaharlal Nehru

1889–1964



Jawaharlal Nehru smiles as a girl puts a garland around his neck. As India's first prime minister, he steered the country after it gained independence in 1947

IN PROFILE

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first prime minister of India and has been hailed as one of the architects of the modern Indian nation state. After training to be a barrister in England, Nehru returned to his native India, became prominent in the Indian National Congress movement and in 1929 called for complete independence from the British Raj. He became premier upon Indian independence in 1947, introduced widespread reforms and remained in office until his death in 1964.

> "Jawaharlal Nehru put his own life on the line when he saw a Muslim tailor being attacked by a mob intent on killing him"

When did you first hear about Jawaharlal Nehru?
I really only got to know him in any deep way as an adult, after reading Alex von Tunzelmann's fantastic book *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire*.

What kind of man was he?
On one level, he was very human, and you can see it in a whole range of his political attitudes, but I suspect he was also someone who was quite austere and didn't suffer fools gladly. He was truly a born leader – he grew up thinking he was born to lead – and that came from his family background. Like Nelson Mandela, he was very conscious of his own dignity and place in history.

What made Nehru a hero?
The creation of a secular Indian nation after the horrors of partition – a remarkable achievement. He also fought against caste discrimination, but India's vast poverty was far bigger than any one man could solve. It's hard for those who come to power as liberation leaders: you're buoyed up by the hopes of so many millions of supporters, but politics becomes more complicated when you're in office. Sadly, his democratic legacy was undermined when his daughter, Prime Minister Indira [Gandhi], declared a state of emergency in the mid-1970s which suspended basic civil rights.

What was his finest hour?
In August 1947, the moment India became free, riots and massacres were taking place across the country. Nehru put his own life on the line when he saw a Muslim tailor being attacked by a mob intent on killing him. He jumped out of his car, got away from his bodyguards, and beat back the crowd with a stick. That wasn't a calculated act; it was the action of a man with a deep conviction as to the kind of society he wanted to build in India, as well as a prime example of his raw courage. That's what makes him a hero to me.

Is there anything you don't hugely admire about him?
He could be verbose and impatient, and I think in the long term he rather lost his strategic grip. The disastrous Sino-Indian War of 1962, which India lost, was a real low point.

What would he make of India today?
I think he would be deeply distressed at how Hindu nationalists have tried to hijack the project of India. And he would have been horrified at the recent riots, and the scapegoating of Muslims. It's not the India he fought for.

If you could meet Nehru, what would you ask him?
Would you do an interview, please?
Fergal Keane was talking to York Membery

Fergal Keane is a special correspondent for BBC News and was awarded an OBE in 1996 for services to journalism. His book on post-traumatic stress disorder will be published by HarperCollins in 2022. *@fergalkeane47*

LISTEN

In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxsb*

BBC RADIO 4

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

Thank you, Sylvia

Sylvia left a gift in her Will to help conquer Stroke

The first we knew of Sylvia was when we received notification of the gift she'd left us in her Will. Shortly after, a beautiful story of a much-loved woman began to unfurl.

Friends remembered Sylvia's kind-heart and her wish to help others. She spent part of her adult-life caring for her mother, and developed a passion for medicine. Becoming a medical secretary was her next step and, in the course of her career, she discovered the devastating impact a stroke could have on people and their families. She saw that research and treatment were vastly under-funded, and she decided to remember the Stroke Association in her Will.

Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too – in the same way.

If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.

Call 020 75661505 email legacy@stroke.org.uk or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

Stroke association

Registered office: Stroke Association House, 240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR. Registered as a Charity In England and Wales (No 211015) and In Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in Northern Ireland (XT33805), Isle of Man (No 945) and Jersey (NPO 369). Stroke Association Is a Company Limited by Guarantee In England and Wales (No 61274)

BALDWIN'S

ESTABLISHED 1872

How to decipher a Roman coin

Laurel wreath. This was a symbol of the emperor during the Imperial Period.

Salus, the Roman goddess of health, seated left on a throne. She holds a patera, a small bowl containing an offering.

Border of dots, marking the edge of the coin.

'NERO CAESAR AVGVSTVS' – Inscription of the emperor's name and titles in Latin.

Expressive and lifelike portrait of Nero, facing right.

'SALVS' - Salus

Emperor Nero (AD 54-68)
Silver Denarius, mint of Rome, AD 65-66

One of the most famous Roman Emperors, Nero reigned from 54 to 68 AD. Whether or not he actually fiddled while Rome burned, he is still remembered as one of the most notoriously hedonistic and irresponsible rulers of Rome.

Nero's reign was fraught with troubles in an ever-expanding Empire. It saw the rebellion of Boudicca, which nearly resulted in the complete abandonment of Roman Britain. In the later years of Nero's rule, the province of Judaea rose up against Roman occupants, triggering a conflict which would last for years.

The denarius was one of the primary coins of the Roman Empire. Minted by hand, in high-purity silver, it represented around a day's wages for a Roman soldier. This coin was minted on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, around 65 AD. It depicts Nero as he would have appeared – with his distinctive, now overweight portrait taking up most of the design on the obverse, or 'heads' side of the coin.

This international Roman currency, legal tender in all parts of the Empire, still lives on to this day. It was the forerunner of the penny, and until decimalisation of the British currency in 1971, pennies were known by the abbreviation 'd', for denarius.

To discover more about this item, contact us on +44 (0)20 7930 6879,
email coins@baldwin.co.uk or go to www.baldwin.co.uk

To contact us:

PHONE: +44 (0) 2079 306879 | EMAIL: COINS@BALDWIN.CO.UK | WEB: www.baldwin.co.uk
VISIT: 399 STRAND, LONDON, WC2R 0LX

/BaldwinsCoins @BaldwinsCoins @BaldwinsCoins YouTube Baldwin's Coins

STUDYING HISTORY IN 2020/21

Universities and Covid-19

History learning at home

Improving diversity in education

Pearson

Get closer to the subject you love!

Pearson are recruiting History teachers to work as Examiners for our GCSE and GCE History qualifications.

We are keen to recruit qualified teachers across the UK who are currently teaching or recently retired.

This is an excellent opportunity to:

- Develop your career in education & boost your income
- Gain invaluable insight into assessment
- Inspire fresh ideas and approaches to teaching your subject

To find out further information, please visit
associate.pearson.com

Illustration by Lauren Rolwing

Covid-19 saw the UK's universities, such as the University of Glasgow (above), cancel in-person teaching. The logistics of teaching and studying during the pandemic are proving complex

DREAMSTIME

How Covid-19 is forcing universities to change

Covid-19 has compelled history departments in UK universities to radically alter their teaching methods. **Richard Toye** explores the challenges that online teaching poses and how they can be overcome

What does the Covid-19 pandemic mean for those studying and teaching history at universities? What challenges does it present for academics and students? How successfully can these challenges be met, and does the crisis present any new opportunities? And can history itself teach us any lessons about how to understand what we have experienced during these complicated times?

First, let's consider what new and returning students can expect when arriving at university this autumn. The honest answer is that it is likely to be disorienting. When lockdown hit in the spring, academics did a brilliant job of making classes online at speed. But the crisis has had a big financial impact on universities, for instance through loss of rents from halls of residence, and is likely to hit recruitment. At the same time, institutions understandably want to offer as much face-to-face teaching as they can, while maintaining social distancing. This hybrid model – part in person, part online – creates serious logistical difficulties. So universities will be trying to do something entirely new, with fewer resources, and there of course remains the chance that a second wave of infections will again throw everything into doubt. It must be remembered, too, that disadvantaged students are likely to be hit disproportionately hard by all the disruption.

So the reality is that, at a minimum, there will be teething problems and likely a certain amount of confusion. On the other hand, compared to some other disciplines (such as

Online teaching is an invaluable tool during the pandemic, but it does pose a host of social challenges. The issue of alienation is worrisome, says Richard Toye, as it could lead to students losing interest in their studies

The King's College library at the University of Cambridge. Covid-19 has forced teachers and students to think creatively about how things can be done differently

those that require lab work) the study of history at undergraduate level does not actually require students to be physically in one another's company. However, the closure of archives has been a blow to those who need to do original, primary research – particularly third year students who are writing dissertations. Some archives are now reopening, albeit with restricted services, but there will be a generation of students whose opportunities in this sphere will be much reduced. This is a great pity, as there is nothing like getting one's hands on original documents to help inspire a historical career.

Navigating the digital world

That said, the range of electronic resources that are available today is extraordinary – although there remains a great deal that has not yet been digitised. And this does not just mean the internet, which everyone can access. Students often do not appreciate that a significant portion of their fees go toward paying for subscription-only databases, such as the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, and Early English Books Online. Together with the large number of e-books and journals that most UK universities also make available, this means that nobody studying the human past should want for the high-quality information they need.

We should not, however, take it for granted that students are 'digital natives' who can navigate the virtual world without guidance. In other words, while lecturers are trying, in difficult circumstances, to convey historical content, they also need to communicate the technical and intellectual skills required to master electronic sources. Today's technology, though a godsend in this crisis, cannot in itself solve all our problems – and can, in some instances, create entirely new ones. Online (or hybrid) teaching presents a series of social challenges that teachers and students will need to overcome together. The greatest of these is the problem of alienation: reduced human contact, and too much time spent in front of a screen, can sap the enthusiasm of even the most dedicated.

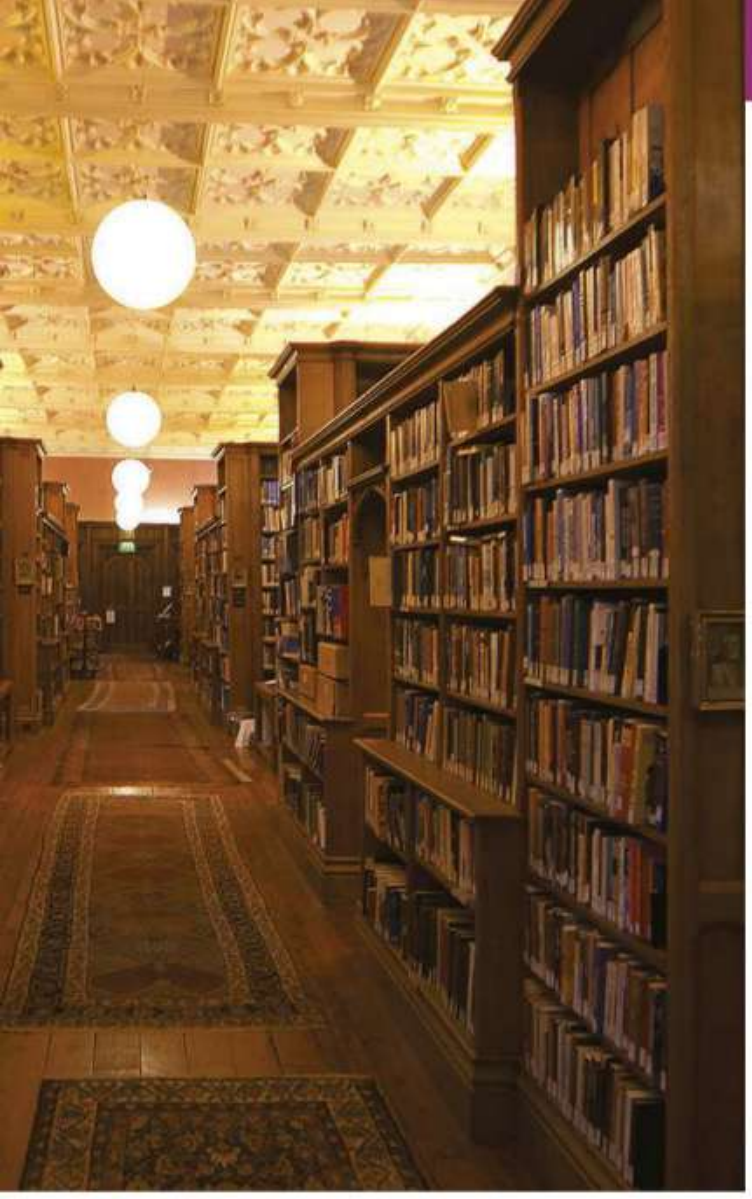
Why is this? After all, certain forms of technology, such as smartphones and social media, are highly addictive. But no one has yet suggested that online meetings, lectures, or seminars fall into this category. A conventional university history seminar revolves around discussing the week's reading, perhaps with some group activities and a student presentation thrown in. Sometimes it can be a struggle to get the conversation going, but at least everyone has the benefit of being able to read other people's body language and facial expressions. These cues are much harder to interpret during a video conference, so simply transferring the seminar (or a part of it) directly online is a potential recipe for disaster. The students may be tempted to sit back, tune out, and hope that others will take the strain of participating. Remember, too, that they may be shielding, or have caring responsibilities, or perhaps just feel awkward about allowing strangers to see into their homes and bedrooms. Undoubtedly, large group seminars are a lot more difficult to manage than one-to-one student meetings, PhD supervisions and the like.

> Lecturers need to communicate the technical and intellectual skills required to master electronic sources

Many university teachers have thought creatively about how things might be done differently. One proposal is the 'asynchronous' seminar, which means allowing students to contribute online comments, moderated by the lecturer, over the course of a week. This has the advantage of flexibility, which may be helpful to those studying remotely in different time zones. It also creates a permanent record of the discussion, to which students can refer back. Yet the lack of a fixed deadline – a particular session in the week which *must* be prepared for – may lead to procrastination. It may also be harder than usual to establish when students are really not coping. Non-attendance at standard seminars is always a warning sign, but how long does a student have to remain silent during an 'asynchronous' seminar before the alarm is sounded?

The fundamental key to teaching during the pandemic will be motivation. We tend to

SHUTTERSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES



As many history courses will be either entirely or partly taught online because of Covid-19, Richard Toye argues that lecturers must strive more than ever to motivate their students and promote cohesion within teaching groups

think of motivation as the property of the individual, a sort of innate quality: "she is a highly motivated person." But, as we have seen, there are many possible obstacles to staying motivated, including technological frustrations, family duties, and social isolation and loneliness. It therefore becomes the lecturer's responsibility both to try to keep learners stimulated and to promote group cohesion, for example by setting tasks for clusters of students to carry out together virtually. Above all, it is important to avoid creating new barriers to engagement. Normal lectures can be split into bite-sized online segments to avoid the onset of fatigue.

A fount of inspiration

In the new term, I will be experimenting with what I and my colleague Warren Dockter (of Aberystwyth University) call the Continuous Engagement Model. Students in my classes will receive a daily weekday email from me with an arresting subject line. "My most embarrassing mistake," for instance, could head up a message about how I misread a question during an exam when I was an undergraduate and spotted the error when I was halfway through writing the answer. I would then give tips about how to avoid this. Some days there will also be a link to a short podcast I have created – in some cases a discussion with a colleague at another university. The point is not to deliver formal curriculum content but simply to pique the students' interest and make them want to learn more. The email will conclude with a call to action – "Hit reply and let me know what you thought about today's topic." I'll try

The closure of archives has affected students, particularly those who are writing dissertations, as they cannot handle original documents

to respond to as many of the replies as I can, even if it's just a few words of acknowledgement. The aim is to build a sense of connection, so that the students know I am interested in their views and want to know how they are getting on. Additionally, there will be a brief weekly online quiz so that students can measure their own knowledge.

Ultimately, students will be motivated by arresting content and important intellectual questions – as long as adjustments are made for the pressures of crisis conditions. For five years, I have been convening an online course for the University of Exeter, delivered for free via FutureLearn, called 'Empire: The Controversies of British Imperialism'. The latest run secured 11,000 sign-ups, perhaps in part due to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as people having more time on their hands during lockdown. Consistently, we have succeeded in maintaining high levels of student engagement, as measured by the numbers completing all six weeks. This, I believe, is because participants are encouraged to debate a series of controversial themes: money, violence, race, religion, gender and sex, and propaganda. As the students inevitably start arguing with one another, they feel compelled to keep on going.

To put it another way, the secret to online teaching, Covid or no Covid, is to make people care passionately about the subject matter. Let us hope that the pandemic comes to an end rapidly and that teaching can all be done in person again as soon as possible. But though much has been lost, the experience of living through coronavirus should teach history students an important lesson. There is no permanent condition called 'normality' to which we can hope and expect to return. Our everyday lives pre-lockdown may have seemed ordinary and mundane, but in fact they were the product of unique circumstances, and there is no law which says they must come back. We may think that safety and community are rights, but historically they have always been privileges. The destruction of our comfort zone should help us develop that most important of a historian's skills: the capacity for empathy with those whose experiences are not our own. H

Richard Toye is professor of modern history at the University of Exeter

SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAMY

Become a history student at home

With Covid-19 throwing traditional teaching into disarray, now is a great time to give remote learning a try. Here we explore online courses for students, whether you're looking for global expertise or access to a community of like-minded learners

GOOD FOR…
ENGAGING CONTENT

Futurelearn

Originally developed by the Open University, Futurelearn is an online learning platform that features a range of engaging MOOCs (massive online open courses), created by experts from leading cultural institutions and universities and intended to make education accessible to all.

Usable via desktop, tablet and mobile, most Futurelearn courses range from 6 to 10 weeks (with some shorter options available), and include video lectures, articles, quizzes, tests and debate forums. Most are subject to a payscale (while some content can be accessed for free, learners can upgrade to take tests and receive certificates).

The history portfolio includes courses on **propaganda and ideology in everyday life**, led by the University of Nottingham and the British Library; **genealogy** from the University of Strathclyde; **British imperialism** from the University of Exeter; and a free course on the **evolution of the British Army** jointly run by the University of Kent and the National Army Museum.
futurelearn.com

You can learn about the role of propaganda and ideology through history in a course hosted by Futurelearn

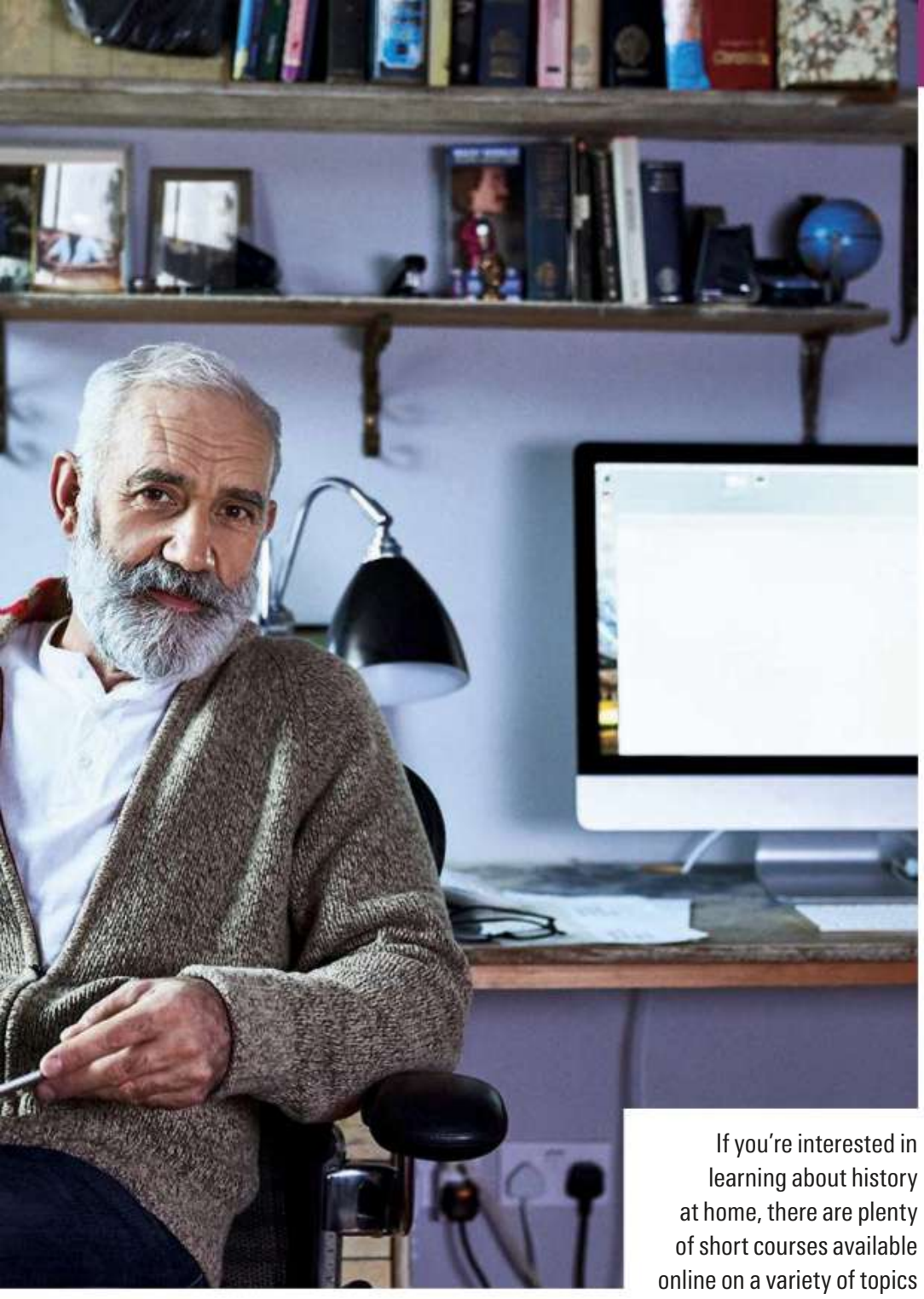
GOOD FOR…
A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

University of Oxford online learning

Oxford's 10-week online courses – consisting of approximately 100 study hours in total – aim to help develop students' historical skills, such as critical thinking and engaging with primary sources. Alongside allocated reading and text-based activities and assessments, students are encouraged to interact with each another on discussion forums, where they can post thoughts on questions set by the tutor and read other learners' contributions. Fees apply and students are expected to submit two written assessments per course.

Courses scheduled for 2020 and early 2021 include in-depth examinations of key figures from history such as **Henry VIII, Elizabeth I** and **Churchill**, as well as introductions to broad subjects such as **politics**, the **Victorians**, the **history of medicine**, and the **making of modern Britain**.
conted.ox.ac.uk/about/online-courses

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES



If you're interested in learning about history at home, there are plenty of short courses available online on a variety of topics

Find out more about Gothic cathedrals such as the Milan Duomo with a Coursera course developed by Yale

GOOD FOR… **INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE**

Coursera

Primarily aimed at those seeking to change careers or arm themselves with new skills, Coursera hosts an array of courses created by academics at universities across the US and Europe. Courses are made up of video lectures, student discussion forums and assignments, with some free elements, and some available only with an upgrade.

Options include courses on **ancient Egyptian civilisation**, **Greek and Roman mythology**, **feminism and social justice,** and **Russian history from Lenin to Putin**. Those interested in historical buildings can also study courses on **Roman architecture and Gothic cathedrals** developed and led by scholars at Yale.

coursera.org

GOOD FOR… **BIG IDEAS**

Gresham College lectures

Head to Gresham College's website to uncover a vast and surprising variety of free talks from some of Britain's most exciting academics. The lectures are usually delivered to a live audience but, since Covid-19, speakers have been delivering them remotely from their own homes. Beginning in October, Joanna Bourke will be delivering a six-part series on ideas about 'evil women', beginning with Eve and ending with Myra Hindley. Also look out for a series of talks marking Black History Month, including David Olusoga on **postwar migration**, Olivette Otele on **slavery and reparations** and Miranda Kaufmann on **black Tudors**. Other upcoming lectures range from **the *Mayflower*** and **Plato** to the **houses of the Boleyn family**, and a large archive of past talks is available for anyone to dip into.

gresham.ac.uk

Miranda Kaufmann will be giving a lecture on black Tudors to mark Black History Month this October

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

GOOD FOR… **FLEXIBILITY**

The Open University free short courses

As well as offering full-blown degree courses via distance learning, the Open University also has a selection of free short courses available on their website. With intended study times ranging between 2 and 20 hours, they also cater for different experience levels, from complete beginners to advanced students. Instantly available to fit in whenever suits your schedule, these short courses could be a good way to test out online learning before investing in a larger course of study, or to gain confidence before doing so. The archive includes several courses on **art history**, as well as on **key thinkers and writers** and significant **historical texts**.

open.edu/openlearn/free-courses

How can we improve diversity within history education?

In the wake of Black Lives Matter, diversity in history teaching has come under increased scrutiny. Six experts consider how the study of the past can be made more inclusive

Hiring more black academics "to teach all sorts of histories" is key to instigating real change in university history education, lecturer Charlotte Lydia Riley argues

Christienna Fryar

"A history that cannot explain what Britain was doing in its empire has little to offer to students"

There are a few ways to think about diversity in history education. As a historian of Britain and the Caribbean, my emphasis is on race and empire. However, this argument extends to other marginalised histories, which all need a greater presence in history curricula. One definition would be a more representative curriculum that connects, in one way or another, British history to the heritages of all students, while another approach might focus on increasing the number of BAME teachers in schools and BAME historians in universities.

These are not distinct projects. The 2018 Royal Historical Society report *Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History* notes that fewer BAME students in Britain opt to study history at the next level (GCSEs, A-levels, and university) than their white counterparts, and the pattern continues when history undergraduates consider postgraduate study. This is what the organisation Leading Routes calls "the broken pipeline". When primary and secondary-school history introduces students to stories about a past that seems relevant to their lives, those students are more likely to continue studying history at more advanced levels.

The most straightforward and effective way to do this would be through rewriting the national history curriculum. Such a rewrite should move away from exceptionalism and towards a more complex and accurate rendering of Britain's past. Some might argue that it is more important for children to develop pride in their country. However, this pride cannot be founded on misinformation. A history that cannot accurately explain what Britain was doing around the world and in its empire has little to offer students of African or south Asian heritage.

This kind of rewrite may be unlikely, in the near future at least. Writing the national curriculum, especially for history, is a political act, orchestrated by politicians rather than educational professionals. In the meantime, the close collaborations between teachers and academics that are already happening should continue as a way to embed these histories, even within the limits of the national curriculum.

Christienna Fryar is a lecturer in black British history at Goldsmiths, University of London

SHUTTERSTOCK

Pritipuspa Mishra

"Studying the history of the other from the other's perspective will train students to be better global citizens who will be more able to function in the increasingly globalised world"

In the heyday of the British empire, India was called the 'jewel of the empire'. As a new university lecturer in the UK who had only recently emigrated from the US, I expected to find undergraduate students who were very aware of the history of India and the British empire. It was their history, after all. Instead, I found students who had very little training in the history of British activities in India during their early education.

On reflection, I think that my assumption was wrong in a very crucial way. I had expected students to know the history of the non-western world because it was part of their history. However, if we truly want to introduce diversity into our school and university history curricula, then we need to address these histories in their own terms. Rather than looking at the history of India, Brazil or China as part of the history of European imperialism, we need to introduce young people to the history of non-western lands and peoples through lenses of their own making. A quick look at the GCSE syllabus shows us that this kind of approach is already in effect for the history of the US. However, there is very little Asian, Latin-American or African history that goes beyond the story of European imperialism or global historical events such as the Second World War.

Why is it important that students study the history of the other from the other's perspective and from outside the framework of the European/non-European relationship? This type of learning will train them to be better global citizens who will be more able to function in the increasingly globalised world. It will help them to understand that empires, transatlantic slavery and economic exploitation of large tracts of the world was not historically inevitable. These peoples and nations were already on a trajectory of their own which was disrupted by the intervention of European imperialism. Learning about the history of India or China in the time before empire can allow students to see this more clearly.

During this pandemic, we need this perspective more than ever. As we come to realise the whole globe is in this common struggle, we are also coming to realise that any long-term solution will need to be based on a recognition of cultural and social diversity across the world.

Pritipuspa Mishra is associate professor of south Asian and post-colonial history at the University of Southampton, and author of *Language and the Making of Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 2020)

A ruined Champa tower-temple in the My Son sanctuary, Vietnam. Peter Frankopan highlights the fact that some history university courses do not touch on this part of the world

GETTY IMAGES

Peter Frankopan

"We need to teach global history by linking all peoples, cultures, continents and periods together, rather than cherry-picking good stories"

One of the biggest challenges for historians is how to open up the study of the past beyond the narrow geographic and periodic tramlines that have shaped history education for too long. Diversity is not just a goal in itself: it is fundamental to how we look at history – but also how we look at the world around us.

History should engage, provoke and open up new pathways for pupils, students, teachers and general readers to better understand the worlds of the past. At the younger end of the scale, an obvious and critical problem comes from the lack of really good history books that are entertaining, readable and accessible. Young adult fiction is booming in the UK, but non-fiction has conspicuously failed to keep up, with one or two notable exceptions (such as Horrible Histories).

Having said that, I never cease to be amazed and impressed at the inventiveness of schoolteachers in finding new materials and fashioning them into resources that help in their classrooms. But they have to work harder than they should because of the lack of texts that could – and should – be available.

When it comes to diversity in general, we need to be constantly challenging the narrowness of a curriculum that exists for little more reason than to streamline testing. That limits educational engagement in history to the familiar terrain of Britain, western Europe, a dose of the US, and a highly selective – and usually extremely negative – introduction to other parts of the world which rarely prompts further investigation. When students learn about China, Russia or the Middle East, it is invariably in terms of revolution, violence and failure rather than contextualising their achievements.

And of course, vast regions are left out altogether. It is perfectly possible, for instance, to gain a history degree without ever having heard the words Champa, Moche, Songhai or Srivijaya, let alone having studied these empires.

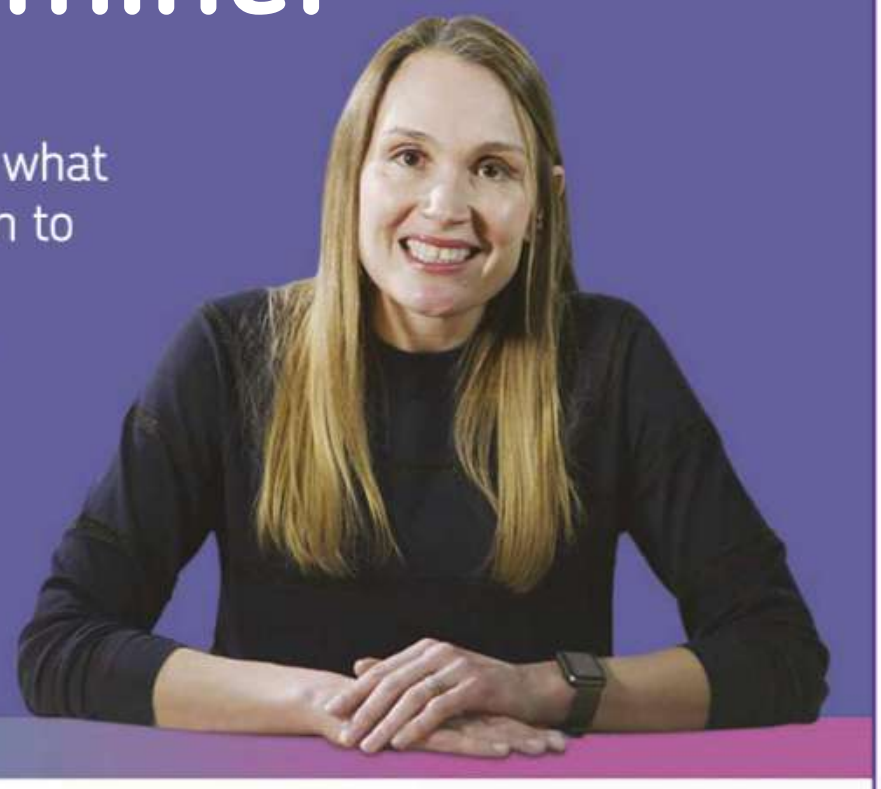
Diversity means providing a joined-up story of a global past that provides perspectives and sets humanity, for good and for bad, in contexts that explain how and why things happened. That means teaching global history as a way of linking all peoples, cultures, continents and periods together, rather than cherry-picking good stories. It is not easy to do well. But it is not impossible.

Peter Frankopan is professor of global history at the University of Oxford, and his books include *The Silk Roads* (Bloomsbury, 2015)

Become an Examiner

Examining has made me feel so secure in what I'm teaching, and that security is passed on to my school community and my students.

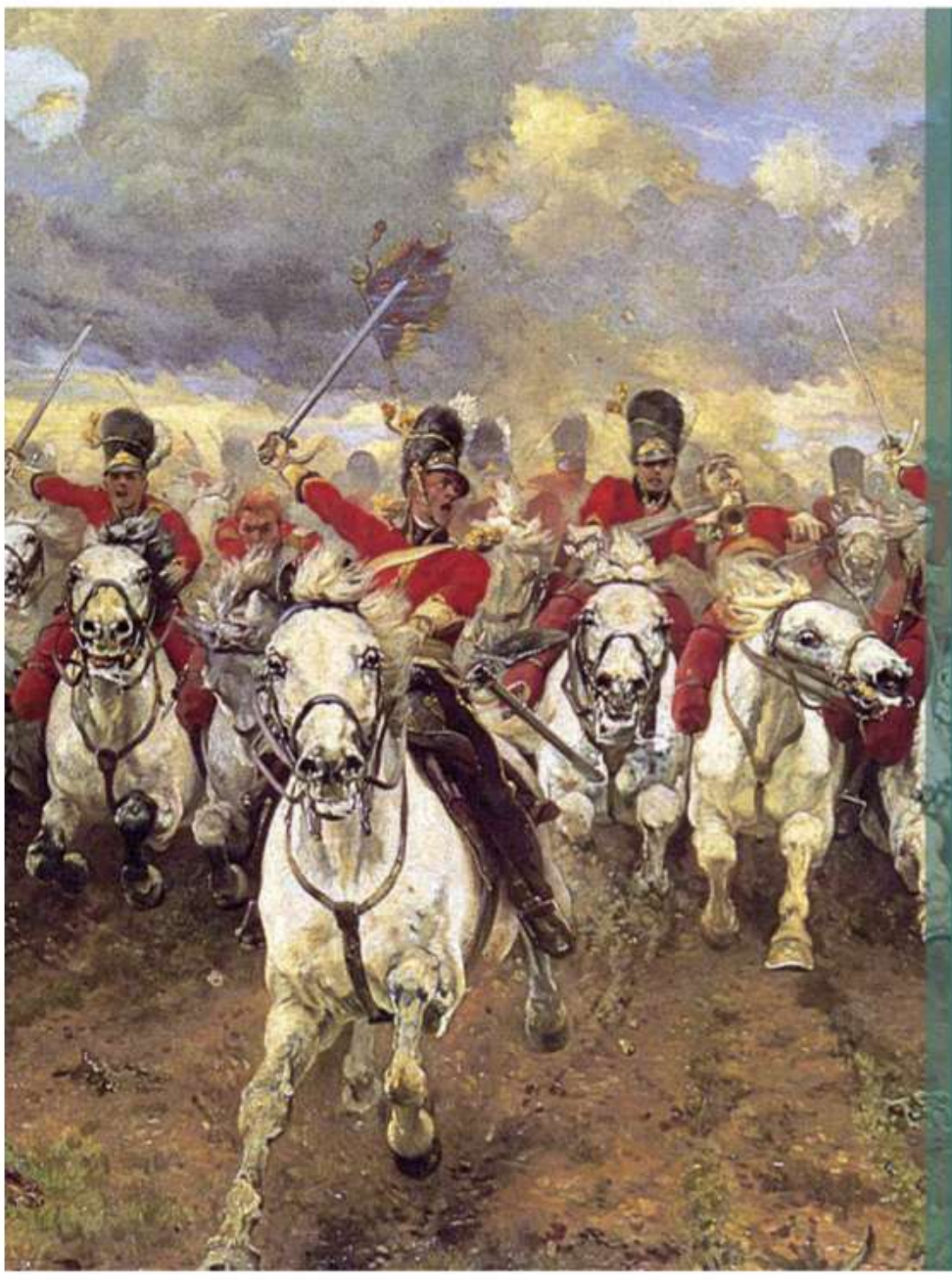
Anna Hunt



We have vacancies in GCSE and A-level History. Join our team, work flexibly from home, and share Anna's experience.

Apply now:
aqa.org.uk/apply

AQA
Realising potential



DEPARTMENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Part-time courses in

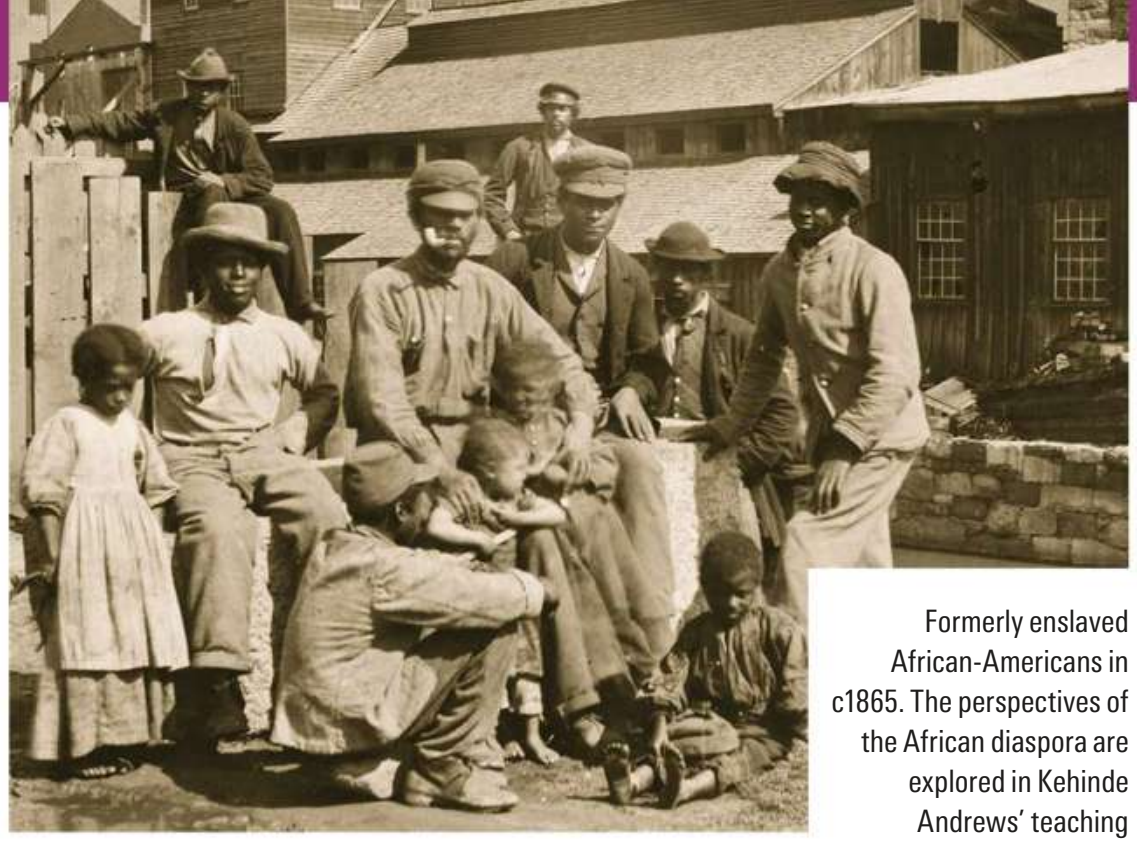
History, including local and social

Short courses:
online courses, weekend lectures, summer schools, lecture series and weekly classes

Oxford qualifications:
undergraduate awards and postgraduate degrees
applications open for 2020 entry

www.conted.ox.ac.uk/history2020

@OxfordConted



Formerly enslaved African-Americans in c1865. The perspectives of the African diaspora are explored in Kehinde Andrews' teaching

Kehinde Andrews

"Where we view society from matters. The view from oppressed people shines a necessary light on inequality"

Given the distinct lack of diversity of academic staff in university history departments who create the knowledge that trickles down to primary and secondary schools, it is no coincidence that most students still learn from a narrow white curriculum. But too often discussions of diversity focus on the people who are employed as educators. We must remember that it is not just the face of history that needs to be changed, but the nature of it. We rely on eurocentric ways of understanding the world that maintain the myth that western civilisation is superior.

The main reason we started Black Studies at Birmingham City University was to offer a different perspective. By viewing the world through the experiences, contributions and perspectives of Africa and the African diaspora, we present a different outlook on society. Histories of empire, legacies of slavery and continued racial inequality become focal points for understanding the world, rather than merely being supplements that are eventually discussed at a surface level if there is ever enough time. Where we view society from matters, because the view from those who are oppressed is clearer and shines a necessary light on how inequality is embedded into every area of life.

For instance, one of the principal flaws in mainstream history is viewing Britain through the lens of the four nations on the British Isles. This creates a narrow version of history, about who has contributed and has a stake in the nation today. But Black Studies organically understands that Britain was only great as a vast empire, and that the subjects in the colonies contributed their blood, sweat and labour to as great an extent as anyone in the mother country. If we understood Britain in its true, broad, imperial sense, then the 'Little England' mentality that is leading public policy could simply not exist.

Kehinde Andrews is professor of Black Studies at Birmingham City University. His books include *Resisting Racism* (Trentham Books, 2013)

Charlotte Lydia Riley

"We cannot improve diversity by simply tweaking at the edges. Instead, we need bold, systemic change"

For too long, universities have ignored the question of diversity, or have merely fiddled around at the edges of it. Voices calling for diversity have been patronised and dismissed. The people doing the work to try to improve the diversity of our history departments and of the history explored within them have been marginalised, and their work has gone unrewarded. New initiatives, like the Black Studies BA (Hons) offered at Birmingham City University (see left), and the MA in Black British History at Goldsmiths, University of London, should be championed and learned from. But all history departments in this country need to diversify, as well as doing the deep systemic and structural work that might be included under 'decolonising'.

There are a number of things that universities could do to push for more diversity in history departments, many of which were highlighted in the excellent work of the 2018 report, *Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History*. Proactive student recruitment from BAME communities, including offers based on contextual data that take into account the fact that these students are likely to experience racism in the school system, would be a start. There also needs to be proactive hiring of BAME academics, to teach all sorts of histories. And BAME people in universities need to be supported economically, politically and emotionally.

Of course, we need to address the curriculum too – but the solution is not merely more diverse histories taught by more white lecturers. And we cannot fall back on global histories to fulfil a quota of diverse stories. We need to teach more black British history, and we need to hire more black historians. We cannot improve diversity by simply tweaking at the edges. It needs bold, systemic change, and it will require action from the very people who are invested in the system continuing as it is.

Charlotte Lydia Riley is a lecturer in 20th-century British history at the University of Southampton. Her book on Britain's relationship with empire, *Imperial Island*, will be published by Bodley Head in 2022

GETTY IMAGES

"Speak French Spanish or Italian as they are really spoken"

Perfect For Home Learning

Save £70!

\+ Plus choose CD OR MP3

Now you can improve your French, Spanish or Italian with these acclaimed bi-monthly audio magazines for learners of French, Spanish and Italian.

Bien-dire, *Bien-dire Initial*, *Tutto italiano* and *Punto y Coma* are published six times a year from France, Spain and Italy and include a glossy magazine packed full of lively, topical and original articles and in-depth interviews in French, Spanish, or Italian to give you the inside track on French, Spanish, or Italian culture. Key words and phrases are glossed into English on the facing page. The articles, in turn, are narrated on the accompanying 60-minute audio CD to enable you to improve your listening comprehension and understand French, Spanish, or Italian as it's really spoken. In addition, every feature is graded for difficulty so that you can assess your progress with each issue. If you now want to be able to speak like a native, a subscription to *Bien-dire*, *Bien-dire Initial*, *Tutto Italiano*, or *Punto y Coma* will inspire, motivate and help you to achieve fluency.

Bien-dire Initial is published on alternate months to Bien-dire to enable you, should you wish, to subscribe to both French magazines at the same time (12 issues a year, six of each).

Subscribe Today!

100% MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Subscribe Today for one year just £89 (Normal Price £99) plus receive for FREE a Michel Thomas Vocabulary Course worth £60, a combined saving of £70!

	Magazine + CDs	Magazine + MP3s
01. Bien-dire Initial French Audio Magazine: **Level: Beginner - Intermediate**	☐	☐
02. Bien-dire French Audio Magazine: **Level: Intermediate - Advanced**	☐	☐
03. Punto y Coma Spanish Audio Magazine: **Level: Intermediate - Advanced**	☐	☐
04. Tutto Italiano Italian Audio Magazine: **Level: Intermediate - Advanced**	☐	☐

** When ordering decide in what format (CD or Download) that you want the audio programme. Bien-dire and Bien-dire Initial are published on alternate months so there is no overlap in content.*

3 easy ways to order:

UK: 24/7 freephone 0800 141 2210

VISIT **www.languages-direct.com/HISTG120**

Pay by credit card or send a cheque to

Languages Direct Ltd, Spike Island,
133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UX, UK

MEDIA REF: HISTG120

Jason Todd

"Teachers need to be wary of stereotypes so that we don't force one topic or individual to do all the work of representation"

The long-term response to the question of improving diversity in education is structural. The immediate prospects of diversifying the teaching profession, especially in history, remain grim: the 2018 report (see Christienna Fryar's piece) revealed chronic under-representation in UK history departments of BAME students and staff, persistent discrimination, and narrow curricula.

A starting point, then, is the curriculum. A broader curriculum will offer all young people the opportunity to understand the dynamic world they live in, and will better serve all history teachers coming into the profession. Teacher training and development is key, too. All trainee teachers bring their own identities into the classroom, and they must be aware of how their identity impacts on young people's learning experience. However, for many teachers who have a limited experience of diversity, thinking through the issues is a challenge. This is exacerbated by a narrow curriculum, structural inequalities and a cultural bias where dominant society – in the form of books and media – reflects the norms of the majority culture. Richard Harris and Gill Clarke's work with trainee history teachers suggests that a good starting point is getting teachers to think about their purpose, the reasons for teaching history and the place of diversity within this. This means thinking about history not just as a body of knowledge, but as a form of knowledge.

We also need more explicit references to race as part of the curriculum. Teachers need to be wary of stereotypes so that we don't force one topic (typically slavery) or individual (often Martin Luther King) to do all the work of representation. Instead, we need to find both agency and complexity in the way that we represent experiences. This means appreciating racial cultures not as bounded entities, but in a dynamic dialogue with a wide array of other influences and across a longer span of time than the 20th century. Teachers will need support, not hectoring, through access to academic scholarship and empirical research in the form of meaningful professional development.

EH Carr argued that history is a continual dialogue between the past and the present. Understanding how stories about the past are constructed offers students opportunities to critique mainstream accounts, as well as to construct their own narratives – this is where the emancipatory potential of history lies. The recent debate on statues, for instance, offers an educational opportunity for examining how societies then and now ascribe historical significance, and to consider various interpretations. History as a subject would benefit from this approach, too. According to the 2018 report, "The intellectual dynamism of history as a practice feeds on a substrate enriched by multiple, often disputing voices." Improving the diversity of our curriculum to include multiple perspectives is to enrich history. H

Jason Todd lectures in history education at the University of Oxford. He is co-author of the 2019 report *Teaching Migration, Belonging, and Empire in Secondary Schools*

Jason Todd argues that we must widen representation beyond key figures such as Martin Luther King (shown at the 1963 civil rights march)

GETTY IMAGES

BECOME AN OCR EXAMINER

Join our team of valued Assessors

Mark A Level and GCSE exams:

History

- Build confidence supporting your students with assessment
- Enhance your subject knowledge
- Great for your Professional Development

JOIN OUR TEAM: **ocr.org.uk/assessor**

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

PURSUE YOUR PASSION FOR HISTORY & HERITAGE

Our newly developed part-time online MA Public History and Heritage programme combines critical academic study of the role of history in the public sphere with practical experience and advanced training designed to prepare you for leadership roles in the heritage sector.

Delve into the world of virtual and augmented reality and see how these new technologies are applied to the Heritage sector like never before.

You will be taught by a team of academic historians and heritage industry experts who can share cutting-edge practice in their fields. They include renowned researchers and authors, who work regularly as consultants on restoration projects and major exhibitions.

Apply now and see what you can achieve: derby.ac.uk/heritage

Tutor Led Online Short Courses

History and Heritage courses include:

- **Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs**
- **The Stuart Court**
- **Artefacts from a British Museum**
- **Victorian Countryside**
- **Fossils**
- **British Prehistory**

Plus courses in Archaeology, Digital Media, Film, Literature, Music History and Wildlife & Environment.

Book now at: www.learnforpleasure.com

PT879 **RJM** MK IX

BLUEBIRD

LIMITED TO 334 PIECES

OWN A PIECE OF WORLD HISTORY

RECYCLED FROM A 1944 SPITFIRE AIRCRAFT

In the Spring of 1945, a Spitfire aircraft crashed on the Russian tundra during a Dogfight. Her incredible story is captivated in the RJM BLUEBIRD – limited to 334 pieces.

The RJM contains a piece of untreated aluminum cut directly from the Spitfire aircraft MK IX PT879 – showcasing the actual marks and dents of an aerodynamic marvel that helped change the course of history.

The RJM BLUEBIRD honors the design principles of the legendary Spitfire aircraft. In addition to this it features a blue sunburst dial and a blue woven strap as a tribute to the RAF pilots and their famous blue uniform.

REC | RECWATCHES.COM

RECOVER • **REC**YCLE • **REC**LAIM

REC Watches is a Danish watch brand founded in 2013. We give new life to classic icons recycling vehicles beyond repair into truly unique timepieces. Every single timepiece incorporates recycled parts from the salvaged icon.